

ANOTHER FINE
KAPPA
PUBLICATION

IS **PUNK** GETTING THE **RVD TREATMENT**?

**DOUBLE
ISSUE!**

PRO Wrestling **ILLUSTRATED**

www.pwi-online.com

**The 2007
PWI POLL**

**50
Burning
Questions
Answered!**

TRISH
Still The Sexiest?

CENA
No. 1 In The 2007 "500"?

ANGLE
Will He Last The Year?

JOE
The Man WWE Most Wants?

MAY 2007

\$8.95 U.S. \$10.75 CANADA £5.25 U.K.



Display Until May 29

from the desk of...

I SN'T IT FUN to spend other people's money? We, as wrestling fans, are really good at it. WWE releases a bunch of mid-carders, and we open Bob Carter's checkbook to half of them. Paul Heyman has a falling-out with Vince McMahon and magazines (yes, our magazines) run cover stories about him leading a charge of former ECW wrestlers to form a modern-day NWO. Oh, and by the way, that group includes The Big Show, Sabu, and Rob Van Dam. What is it that Heyman, Big Show, Sabu, and Van Dam have in common? They are still on the WWE payroll. So we don't even want to wait till people are free agents; we want TNA to invest in the future's market.

In spite of Kurt Angle's absurd claim on the *Bubba The Love Sponge* radio show that TNA's backers (whoever they are!) can "buy Vince McMahon 10 times over," there is no indication that TNA has the means, or the desire, to be as aggressive as many would have them be. The Carters have not exactly been timid, mind you. While not seeing a dime's worth of profit, they are savvy enough to know they have to spend on talent to give them a fighting chance. Kurt Angle, Sting, Samoa Joe, and Christian Cage are not working for Wrestling Society X wages. In business, however, there is always a point of diminishing returns. TNA can re-stock its roster with former WWE wrestlers, and they might pull in a larger audience by doing so, but when the investment becomes higher than the return, it becomes bad business to go that route. I'm quite sure that Ms. Carter is regularly given a list of wrestlers who will "turn the company around." I'm also quite sure it's not always an easy call for her to make.

Chris Jericho would certainly look good in a TNA uniform, but it would take an awful lot of money to convince him to burn his bridge back to WWE. Would he be worth the investment? How about Goldberg? He'd create a brief stir, but he's had just enough success, both in and out of wrestling, to have acquired a slightly inflated opinion of his worth. Brock Lesnar would be huge, absolutely. But his availability is questionable after coming to a release settlement with WWE, and he won't even discuss the possibility of wrestling again until he sees how his newest career, as a mixed martial artist, pans out.

As I eluded to earlier, the cover of the current issue of *The Wrestler/Inside Wrestling* (Volume 14, 2007) features Paul Heyman, along with Lita, Big Show, Sabu and Rob Van Dam, with the headline, "TNA To The Extreme: Will Paul Heyman Lead An ECW Faction To Florida?" We make no illusions about the fact that there is no factual basis for this story. The writer, former Editor-in-Chief Dave Lenker, presents a scenario by which TNA can take advantage of the fans' disenchantment with the current ECW, Heyman, Show, and Van Dam's pending availability, and the fans' love for federation vs. federation rivalries that actually make sense. Are we suggesting that TNA hire Heyman, Big Show, and Van Dam if they become free agents? Yeah, yeah, I guess we are. We're signing checks for people without even knowing what the account balance is. But I challenge you or anyone at TNA to read Lenker's story (for free at pwi-online.com) and tell me it doesn't make sense.

The TNA vs. NWX (New World Extreme) could play out over the course of weeks, months, or maybe a couple of years, if we can imagine history repeating itself. And once it is over, TNA would have had a good chance to see if Heyman would be a good fit for a permanent position on the creative team. In the long run, that could mean more to ensuring a return on investment than the angle itself.

Stu Saks
Publisher

PRO Wrestling
ILLUSTRATED

STANLEY WESTON
Founder
(1919-2002)

PUBLISHER

Stuart M. Saks
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Harry Burkett

MANAGING EDITOR
Lisa Rocchi

SENIOR ART DIRECTOR
Jim Malloy

ART DIRECTORS

David Romanosky
Olivia Wierzbicki
Sherry Stravino
Kevin Boone

PRODUCTION MANAGER
Bethany Lawler

PRE-PRESS DIRECTOR
Cliff Campo

CONTRIBUTING EDITOR
David Lenker

SENIOR WRITERS

Dan Murphy
Brandi Markiewicz
Frank Krewda
Frank Ingiosi

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Matt Brock
Mike Spillane
Bill Meltzer
Tim Drake
Al Alvar
Steve Silver
Kevin McElvaney
Elizabeth A. Hunter
James Guttman
C.F. Hunter
Brady Hicks
Jake Black
Philip Variale

CONTRIBUTING ARTIST

Jason Conlan

CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS

George Napolitano
Joe Zanolle
Steve Beyer
Timothy A. Walker
James McAfee
Gary Dineen
Mary-Kate Grosso
Warren Bernstein
Alfred Giancoli
Matt Roberts
Duane Long
George Tahiros
Vern Verna
Mike Lano
Keichi Yoshizawa
Wayne McCarty
Dorothy Lee
Greg Greenland
Scott Romer

PRESIDENT

Despina McNulty

CIRCULATION DIRECTOR

David Tyler

RETAIL SERVICES DIRECTOR

Brian Goppola

NATIONAL CIRCULATION MANAGERS

Robert Nucci
Dave Hagman

ADVERTISING DIRECTOR

Vince Bellissima

(215) 643-6385

vbellisima@kappapublishing.com

ADVERTISING ASSISTANT

Dianne Weber

SUBSCRIPTION INQUIRIES

London Publishing Co.

P.O. Box 2029, Dept. 9

Marion, OH 43306-8129

(615) 734-1212

CustSrv@kappapublishing.com

Pro Wrestling Illustrated (ISSN: 1043-7576), Vol. 29, No. 5, May 2007, is published monthly, including two special issues, six double issues, and the PWI Almanac by London Publishing Co., 6198 Butler Pike, Suite 200, Blue Bell, PA 19422. Periodicals postage paid at Blue Bell, PA 19422, and additional post offices. Postmaster: Send change of address notices to: Pro Wrestling Illustrated, P.O. Box 2029, Dept. 9, Marion, OH 43306-8129. Single copy price \$8.95 (\$10.75 in Canada, \$5.25 in U.K.). Subscription price \$97.40 in the U.S. (\$109.40 in Canada and remaining countries). Not responsible for the loss or non-return of unsolicited articles or photographs, which will not be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed envelope bearing the proper amount of postage. The entire contents of this magazine are copyright ©2007 London Publishing Co. No part of this magazine may be reproduced without the written permission of the publisher. All rights reserved. Publisher is not responsible for the accuracy or content of any advertisements appearing in this magazine, nor the delivery or quality of merchandise or services offered. No endorsement of any such advertisement is intended or implied. Advertisers and agencies assume liability for claims arising from the content of their advertisements. FOR ADVERTISING INQUIRIES AND RATES: (215) 643-6385. U.S. and Canadian distribution by Kable Distribution Services Inc., 641 Lexington Ave., New York, NY 10022. International distribution by Worldwide Media Service Inc., 115 East 23rd St., New York, NY 10010. U.K. distribution by Comag, Tavistock Rd., West Drayton, Middlesex UB7 7QE, England. Printed in U.S.A.



May 2007

PRO Wrestling ILLUSTRATED

contents

features

22

PRESS CONFERENCE: CHRIS SABIN

Once touted as the savior of the X division, Chris Sabin is handling his fourth X title reign differently than his previous three. Some may call his change a heel turn; he sees things in another light

28

THE 2007 PWI POLL: 50 BURNING QUESTIONS ANSWERED!

Some select subscribers take on 50 questions on everyone's minds, and we review the insider poll results from past years

86

FEAR! BATISTA'S INVISIBLE OPPONENT

"The Animal" has taken on all comers since returning to Smackdown and reclaiming his title. Despite his success, Batista is living in constant fear of his greatest opponent, one the Batista bomb won't fend off!

92

AMERICA'S MOST WANTED WILL BE BACK! "IT'S OKAY TO LOVE EACH OTHER AND HATE EACH OTHER AT THE SAME TIME"

Rick Steiner knows what it's like to love your tag team partner and detest him at the same time. He gives Storm and Harris some advice on how to co-exist despite their bickering ways—and he gives AMW fans hope for the future of their favorite tag team

96

ANOTHER ECW GOLDEN BOY COULD LOSE HIS LUSTER: IS WWE VAN DAMMING C.M. PUNK?

Why would ECW bring in indy darling C.M. Punk and ignore the response of his increasingly large fan base? It seems that Punk is feeling what RVD has been enduring since his fall from championship grace

100

BAM BAM BIGELOW: 1961-2007 "HE WAS A BIG MAN, BUT, BOY, COULD HE MOVE!"

PWI offers a look back at the life and career of "The Beast From The East," whose journey ended too soon

104

HE BEAT THE MAN, BUT CAN HE BE THE MAN? KENNY'S STEALING MORE THAN VICTORIES FROM THE "NATURE BOY"

The new kid in town has taken to beating the big man on campus at his own game, but does Kenny Dykstra really have what it takes to become the man in WWE? Not if he can't come up with some original tactics of his own

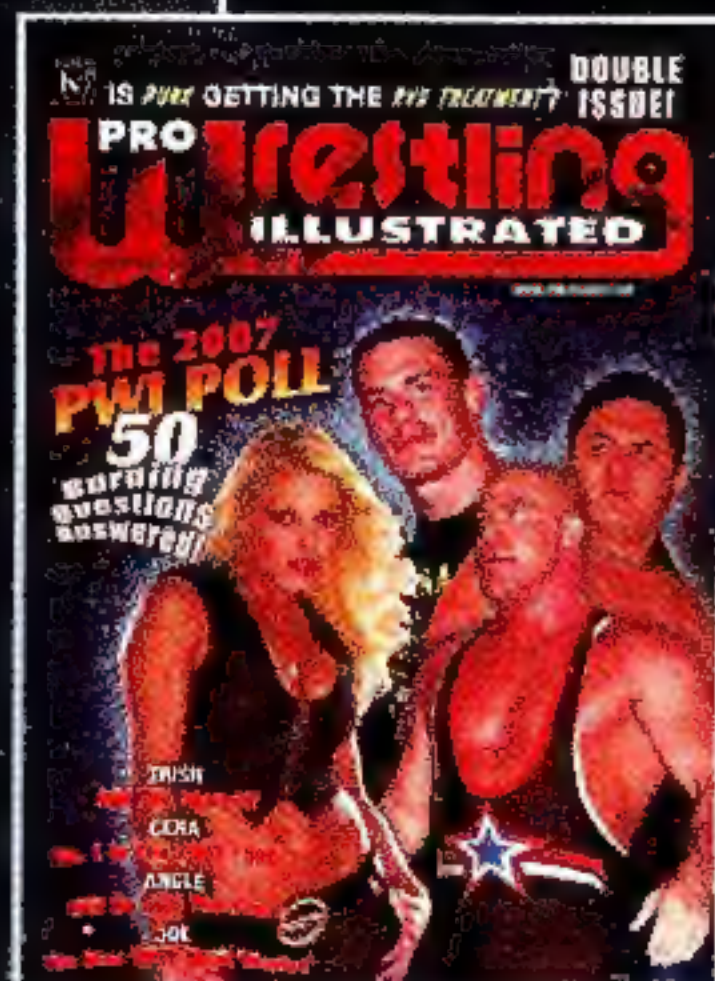
COVER PHOTOS:

Trish Stratus and John Cena:
Courtesy of USA Network
Kurt Angle and Samoa Joe:
by Joe Zanolle

COVER DESIGN:

Sherry Stravino

LOOK FOR THE 2007 PWI WRESTLING
ALMANAC, ON SALE APRIL 24



departments

3 FROM THE DESK OF ... Stu Saks

Spending someone else's money is always fun

6 BEFORE THE BELL

"Hitman" hits the stage, "Talkin' Trash," "Internet Insider," and more!

10 RINGSIDE with Bill Meltzer

Vince disses ECW, Joe leaves ROH, and The Game vs. "The Game"

16 IN FOCUS by Dave Lenker

The strife in the life of Bam Bam, plus Monty Brown's French repackaging

18 OFF THE TOP ROPE with Brandi Mankiewicz

Our "Queen" takes a peek inside her mailbag

110 THE BUSINESS PAGE by Frank Ingiosi

Major business stories, stockwatch, plus a full ratings rundown

114 WIN, LOSE, OR DRAW by Harry Burkett

The wonder of the PWI photo archives

116 THE STRAIGHT SHOOTER by Dan Murphy

What's good and bad about WSX

118 THE TRADE'S MARK by Frank Ingiosi

Deliberation begins on John Cena's future HOF status

120 12 QUESTIONS WITH ... CHASYN RANCE

Why people call Chasyn to get a hold of Teddy Hart

122 THE WRESTLING OBSERVER Hall of Fame

We pay tribute to Ed Don George

126 INDEPENDENT ROUNDUP by Al Alven

What's been going on at the smaller shows of late

128 THE INTERNATIONAL REPORT by Mike Spillane

Kurt Angle to debut in Japan, Mistico wins another mask, Mascarita Sagrada comes up short, and more

130 ARENA REPORTS

Results from around the world, plus our spotlight card

136 PWI CLASSIC

The eternal question: How valuable is ECW?

142 BETWEEN FALLS

Another Batista/Booker Switch; Fed Up With WWE; A Reevaluation

144 OFFICIAL WRESTLING RATINGS

Rankings for Raw, Smackdown, ECW, tag teams, TNA, ROH, and more!

146 DRAWING BLOOD

The odd but entertaining perspective of Jason "Mr. J" Conlan

28



before the bell

Compiled by James Guttman

"Hitman" Hits The Stage

Bret Hart has participated in numerous creative projects outside of pro wrestling. He has been the subject of the documentary *Wrestling With Shadows*, and has appeared in television shows such as *Lonesome Dove: The Series* and *The Simpsons*. Yet, his latest role might have been the most enjoyable and surprising—as an actor in a hit family musical.

Hart has been touring as the Genie of the Lamp in the musical *Aladdin*. He was first approached to play the Genie in 2004 for a Toronto run of the production. After suffering a stroke in 2002, Bret accepted the role with a degree of trepidation. "I felt like I had recovered from my stroke, but there was still an emotional fatigue that goes along with the recovery process. I was happy when the theater director, Ted Dykstra,

thought of me, and I saw it as a fun way to get back into the public eye."

A successful Christmas 2004 run of the musical helped Hart feel more confident about his acting ability. He also saw a connection between wrestling and theatrical production. "The same brain processes are used to memorize lines or hitting your spots in wrestling. The only difference is if I miss a line during the musical, the other actors can ad-lib with me. If you screw up in wrestling, you can get your teeth knocked out."

After a two-year hiatus, Hart was happy to reprise his role for a 2006 tour across Canada. Bret felt the musical appealed to wrestling and non-wrestling fans. "There is a lot of tongue-in-cheek humor about my Bret 'Hitman' Hart character. There is even a brief scene where I appear in a wrestling ring. I love how the musical appeals to a broad range of people."

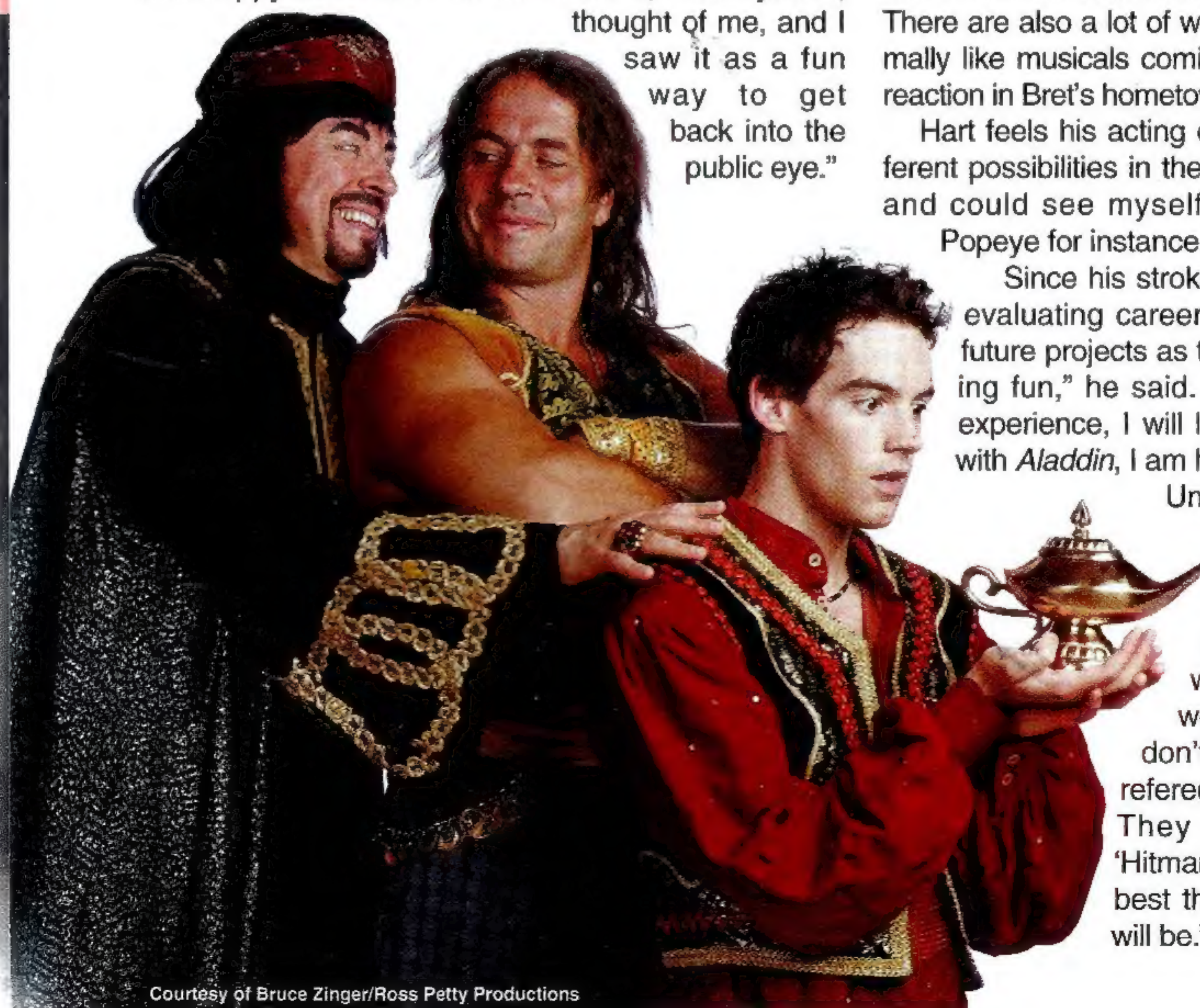
Fellow actor Jamie McKnight has seen Hart grow into the role. "At first, Bret seemed to be a bit outside his safety zone," he said. "He was not used to being given lines. Now he seems to be having a lot of fun with it. There are also a lot of wrestling fans who may not normally like musicals coming to see Bret. The audience reaction in Bret's hometown, Calgary, was crazy!"

Hart feels his acting experience could open up different possibilities in the future. "I enjoy the live stage and could see myself playing certain roles, like Popeye for instance."

Since his stroke, Hart has new criteria when evaluating career decisions. "I always look at future projects as to whether or not I will be having fun," he said. "If I feel like I will enjoy the experience, I will look at the project. Right now with *Aladdin*, I am having a great time."

Unfortunately for wrestling fans, the only place to see Bret may be on stage or on DVD. "I don't really see myself getting back into wrestling. I can't see the role I would play in wrestling. My fans don't want to see me as a guest referee, manager, or commissioner. They want to remember Bret 'Hitman' Hart: the best there is, the best there was, the best there ever will be."

—Steve Johnson



Courtesy of Bruce Zinger/Ross Petty Productions

Talkin' Trash

10. **Scott Steiner turns out to be Christian Cage's consultant.** Consultant Tip number-one: Dye your goatee white with a little black streak.

9. **Gene Snitsky shaves his head and eyebrows upon entering ECW.** Guess no one told him that the "First Wrestler To Shave His Eyebrows Gets A Title Run" memo was just a joke.

8. **TNA special airs on Monday night while Raw is pre-empted for the Westminster Dog Show.** The show is called This Is TNA. That way people don't get confused and think it's a cooking show or something.

7. **Wrestling Society X debuts on MTV with tons of explosions and broken tables.** The olden guys used to call it "rasslin'." Vince McMahon calls it "sports entertainment." These guys call it "kaboom!"

6. **John Cena's *The Marine* DVD debuted as the number-one rental in the United States.** They should have made a special DVD that lets you spin the center of it.

5. **Homicide defeated Bryan Danielson in an**



emotional match to win the ROH title. Tag champ in TNA. The champion of Ring of Honor. Is there anything about this guy that doesn't scream "next generation superstar"?

4. **"Chyna Doll" Joanie Lauer appears on *Larry King Live* after Anna Nicole Smith's death and gets blasted by Monique Goen, one of Anna Nicole's friends, for trying to get "in the limelight."** If you have a talk show and you book Joanie Lauer, you know what you're getting. It must be cheaper than just renting a train and having it get into a wreck inside the studio.

3. **Vince McMahon announces that the old ECW "sucked" and fans of the old ECW are "stupid."** Who owns the old ECW tape library? Oh. That's right. Good way to sell that footage.

2. **The Undertaker puts his WrestleMania streak on the line against Batista's Smackdown World championship.** Does "The Animal" have what it takes to end the legacy of "The Dead Man"?

1. **Donald Trump drops piles of money on a live WWE Raw crowd.** Fortunately for the people in attendance, there were no gunshots or rioting. Unfortunately for the people watching it at home, there were no gunshots or rioting.

© 2006 World Wrestling Entertainment, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

The Internet Insider

The following wrestling-related items were culled from the various wrestling-related websites—or were they? See if you can pick out the items that were actually reported on the Internet (which doesn't necessarily mean they're true) and the ones we blatantly made up. The answers appear at the end of this column on page 9.

1. In a blog entry for wwe.com, GoDaddy Diva Candice Michelle told a story about how she had to relieve herself on the way to the *Maxim* Super Bowl party. In her entry, an honest—almost too honest—Candy explains her plight. It seems Candice couldn't hold it as she took the three-hour drive. When it reached an unbearable point, she asked the CEO of GoDaddy, Bob Parsons, if he'd fire her if she decided to "pee on the side of the road." He replied that she could go on the roof for all he cared. Hearing this, Candice explained that she slipped off her panties and urinated all over the road. Not only did Candice do this, but she also told everyone about it in her blog. She accentuated her pleasure in doing it by closing out the story with "What a relief!"

2. Jake "The Snake" Roberts made a very brief appearance at a recent Full Impact Pro show. Roberts



Courtesy of USA Network

was scheduled to make a return to the company after a previous show that saw him get into an altercation with Larry Sweeney. Right before he was scheduled to go out, Jake asked for money. He claimed that he didn't know that the show was going to be put out on DVD. The argument became so heated that promoter Sal Hamoui had to call local authorities to have Roberts taken from the building.

3. "Mr. Wonderful" Paul Orndorff is keeping busy. The former Heenan Family member has opened a new chain of ice cream shops in Miami, Florida. The shop is called "Wonderful Ice Cream" and offers more than 30 flavors. The secret is Paul's method of mixing cream and ingredients. According to Orndorff, it's a family secret and one that he's devoted to keeping that way. Says Paul, "Everyone's invited to come down to Wonderful Ice Cream, even my old opponents—although I can't promise I won't give them a piledriver!"

4. WWE has issued statements to stores across the Midwest that their newest action figures may take on a life of their own. WWE and the manufacturer, Jakks Pacific, has been receiving word that some of their talking figures have been "defective." According to the statement, the toys may make noises that sound like "offensive comments" or "Chinese profanity." As of press time, WWE is still looking into whether this was the work of a disgruntled factory employee or common vandals.

Bizarro 12 Questions with ... Rey Mysterio Jr.

We value our health, which is why there are certain questions that we'd never ask certain professional wrestlers during an interview. These are those questions:

10. Before we start, do you need a booster seat or something?
9. Phone book, maybe? I can get a Yellow Pages from the closet.
8. What happened to your horns?
7. Did you stash them away with your Osh Kosh B'Gosh overalls?
6. Why do you like your area code so much?
5. Who would win in a fight? Your son, Dominic, or Judy Bagwell?
4. Were you really Smackdown World champion or did we dream that?
3. Remember when Kevin Nash used you like a lawn dart and spiked you into a trailer?
2. What? No. Of course you don't. You were getting your head spiked into a trailer at the time.
1. Can you do us a favor? Please. Just once, say, "Whatchu talkin' 'bout, Willis?"



We Heard That!

"You've got to realize, I've been stabbed three times; I'm not too used to this kind of love from people. It has been unbelievable the amount of support I've gotten. I'm getting letters, packages, e-mails, and phone calls from so many people, it's just overwhelming. I sincerely don't have the words to express my gratitude and thanks to everyone who has contacted me. I'm a very lucky person."

—Roddy Piper, speaking about his fight with cancer on wwe.com

"If they keep putting together b.s. that Joe Blow, Tom Thumb, and whoever else can go out in their backyard and mimic, you're going to continue to see the downward spiral of wrestling. Today it's called entertainment. In five years, it'll be called cartoons."

—Harley Race, commenting on wrestling's current direction on worldwrestlinginsanity.com

"I've actually been working on a five-sided design for the Rhomboid Wrestling Federation that I think is going to take off like gangbusters. Besides that, there ain't never been a four-sided ring that could contain Jericho ..."

—Chris Jericho, responding to whether his return

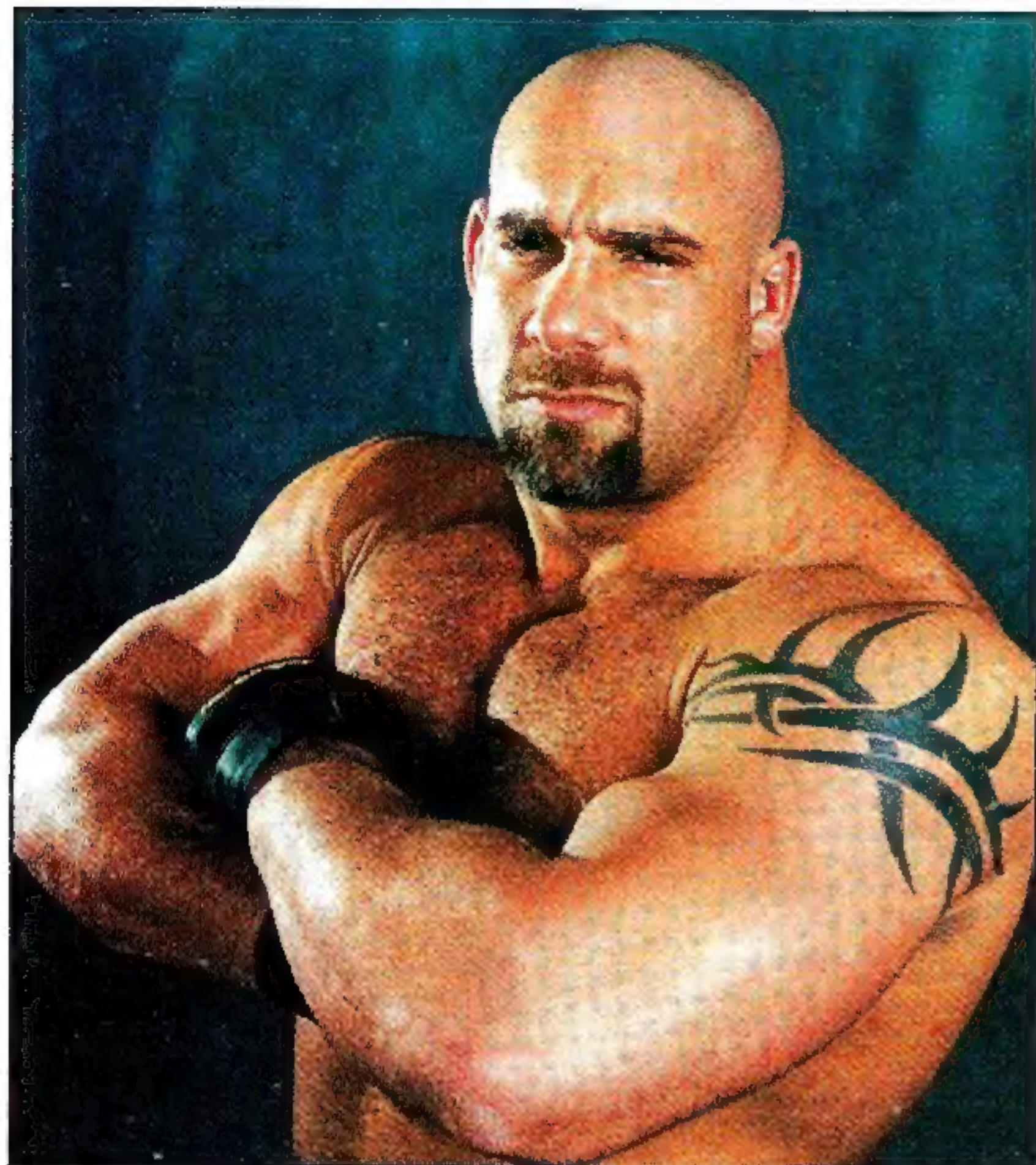
to wrestling would involve a six-sided ring in an interview on tnawrestling.com

"If it wasn't for a phone call from Lesnar, I wouldn't have known about that. 'You know that they are using our name again' ... You see people capitalizing on your name, and it benefits you in absolutely no way, except for the fact that it



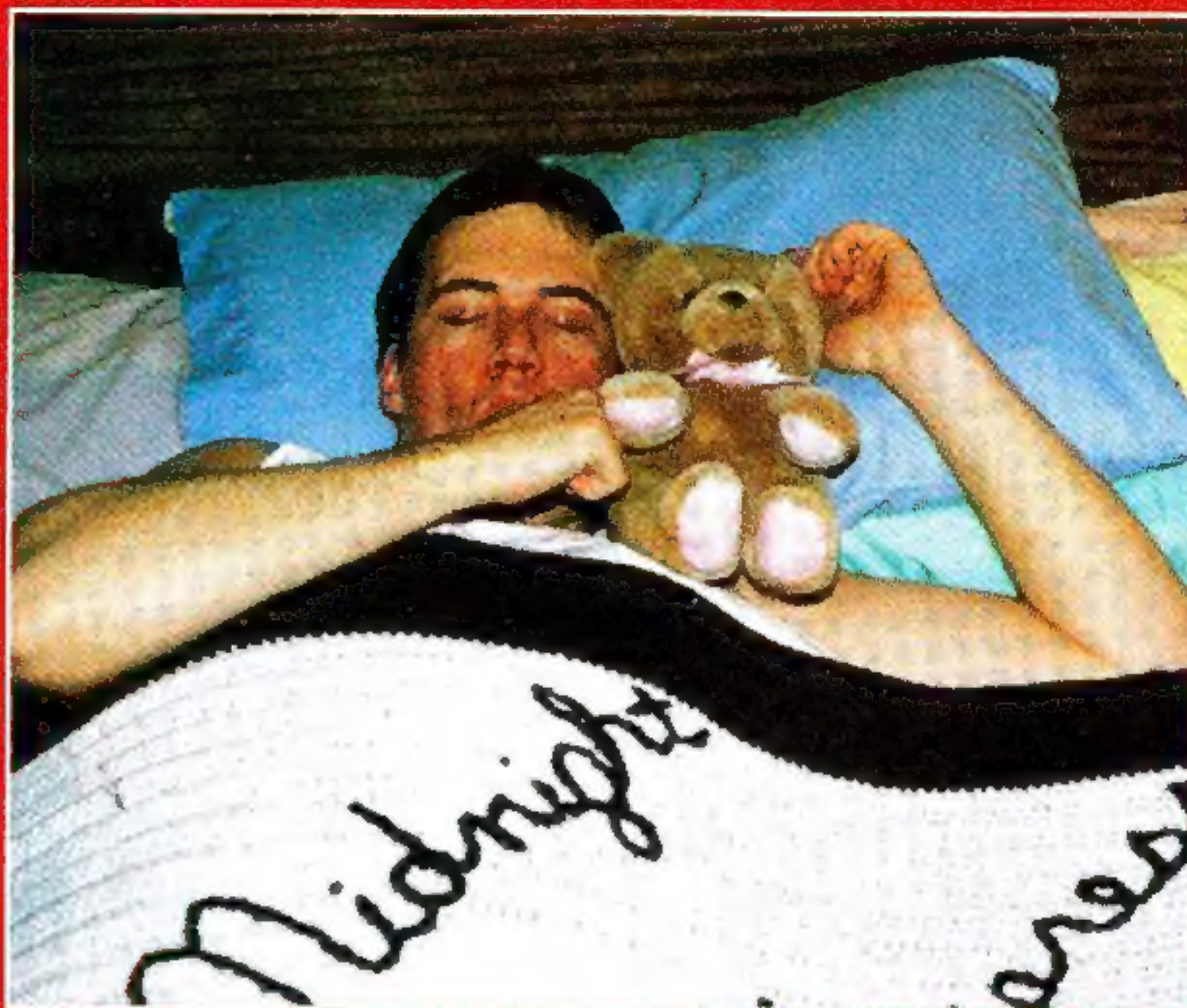
keeps the name out there. If it were not for wrestling, I wouldn't be doing this Showtime gig and the Spike TV gig, because as many bad things that were associated with it, that profession kind of put me on the map."

—Bill Goldberg, complaining about TNA using his name as a tease for revealing Christian Cage's consultant in an interview with *The Miami Herald*



caption me!

Think you're a better writer than the editors at *PWI*? Here's your chance to prove it, punk! This candid shot of Jim Cornette settling in for a restful night's sleep demands a short, concise, and downright uproarious caption. If you think you're up to the task, e-mail your zany quips to prowrestlingillustrated@yahoo.com, or slap a stamp on an envelope and snail-mail it to "Caption Me!," Box 1148, Ft. Washington, PA 19034. Three issues from now, we'll share with you the best of the bunch—and the funnier the better!



February's Best

"No, officer, I have no idea ... How fast was I going?"

—Z. Mann Zilla, Buffalo, NY

"So you're telling me that if I go one-on-one with this thing in an 'Extreme Rules' match, I can get my rematch for the ECW title?"

—Kevin Davis, Columbia, SC

"High!? What makes you say that, officer? I'm just having trouble getting my car started."

—George Parker, Philadelphia, PA

"You think John Cena in *The Marine* was good, wait 'til you see me in the latest WWE film, *Racing Stripes—The Sequel*!"

—E. Howard Ostrom, Winter Springs, FL

RVD's horse feels the effects of second-hand smoke and, in the words of Steve Martin, gets very, very small.

—Barton Remley, Chicago, IL



Answers to Internet Insider:

Items 3 and 4 are totally made up.

ringside

With Bill Meltzer

IT'S NEVER EASY to tell where the real-life **Vince McMahon** ends and the on-screen "Mr. McMahon" heel character begins. Already angered by the controversial departure of **Paul Heyman**, old-school ECW fans have made it clear that McMahon's presence is not welcome at ECW tapings, even though everyone is aware that the newfangled

version of the promotion is a WWE brand extension.

McMahon has taken delight in making on-air appearances on ECW shows and repeatedly mocking the original version of the product and the quality of many of its holdover performers. On the one hand, this could be a brilliant strategy by which ECW originals take back their promotion from the new breeds, while McMahon reaps the profits. But it also could be a reflection of the real tension within the struggling brand. Given McMahon's history, the truth probably lies somewhere in the middle.

Regardless of whether ECW recovers or sinks into oblivion, McMahon will claim victory. Meanwhile, the most outspoken critic of ECW's current direction, not surprisingly, is **Rob Van Dam**. It will be interesting to see how he fares now that McMahon has reasserted his control over ECW.

So far, the early installments of MTV's Wrestling Society X have received mixed reviews from fans. Some love the breakneck pace of the matches, featuring high-risk, creative moves. Traditionalists criticize the promotion as more of a

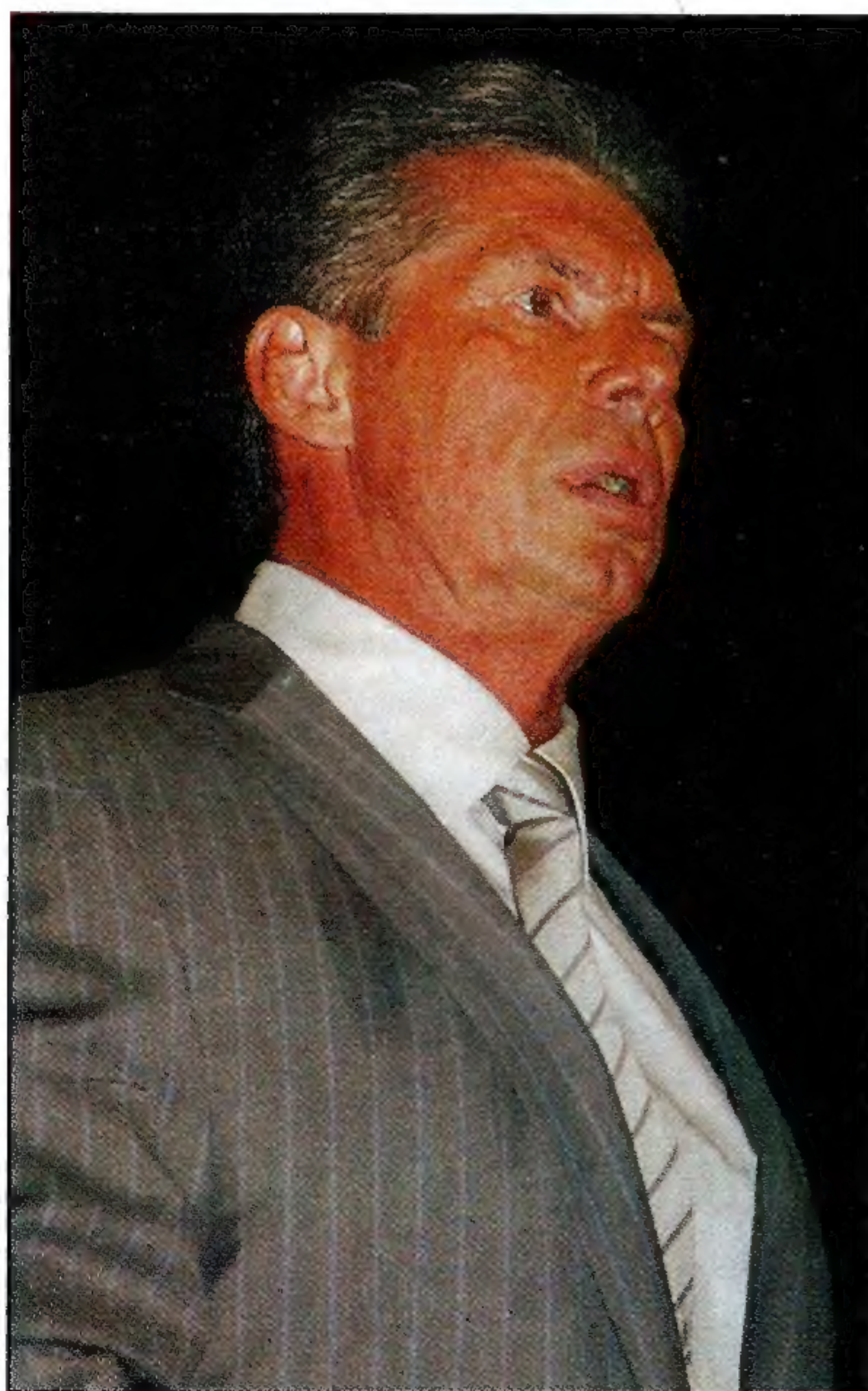
stunt show than a wrestling event. It remains to be seen whether fans who've become disgruntled with TNA and WWE's version of ECW will buy into WSX as their alternative promotion of choice. In the most notable match to date, **Vampiro** defeated **6-Pac** (Sean Waltman) to become the first WSX champion.

After maintaining an active Ring of Honor schedule while simultaneously competing in TNA, **Samoa Joe** has decided to focus his efforts solely on TNA. To celebrate his legacy in the independent promotion (and provide a final gate boost), Joe recently conducted a multi-state ROH farewell tour, featuring matches in New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, Dayton, and the United Kingdom. Meanwhile, Joe's TNA arch-rival, **Kurt Angle**, is slated to make his New Japan debut.

Rap artist **The Game** has made noise about challenging **Triple-H** to a fight for the right to use "The Game" nickname professionally. Born Jayceon Taylor, the hip-hop performer told the press, "I'm much stronger than he is. I was 'The Game' long before he came about. He's on TV wrestling, and it's pretend, made up. I wrestle in real life and I win." In the unlikely event anything comes out of this publicity-seeking challenge, our money is on Mr. Helmsley to show Taylor how tough pro wrestlers really are.

Rumors abound that **Chris Jericho** plans to return to the ring in the relatively near future. While denying that a return is imminent and refusing to speculate on which promotion he would join, Jericho acknowledged that WWE, TNA, All Japan, New Japan, and NOAH had all been in touch with him. He also said he has started to watch wrestling again to keep up with WWE and TNA events. Adding more fuel to the rumors, he recently did an interview for TNA's official website. In October of this year, Jericho's self-penned autobiography, entitled *A Lion's Tale*, will hit bookstore shelves.

In a recent *Miami Herald* interview, former WCW and Raw World



Vince McMahon often expresses his personal feelings through wrestling storylines, and it seems as if the WWE chairman has been doing that in his recent ECW appearances. McMahon may not appreciate the ECW product, but he may do what's necessary to salvage the brand.



Samoa Joe has parted ways with Ring of Honor, signaling the end of an era in the popular indy promotion. The former ROH champ wrestled in some of the greatest matches in the company's history, including a classic against Kenta Kobashi.



Photo Courtesy of Fox/Michael O'Donnell

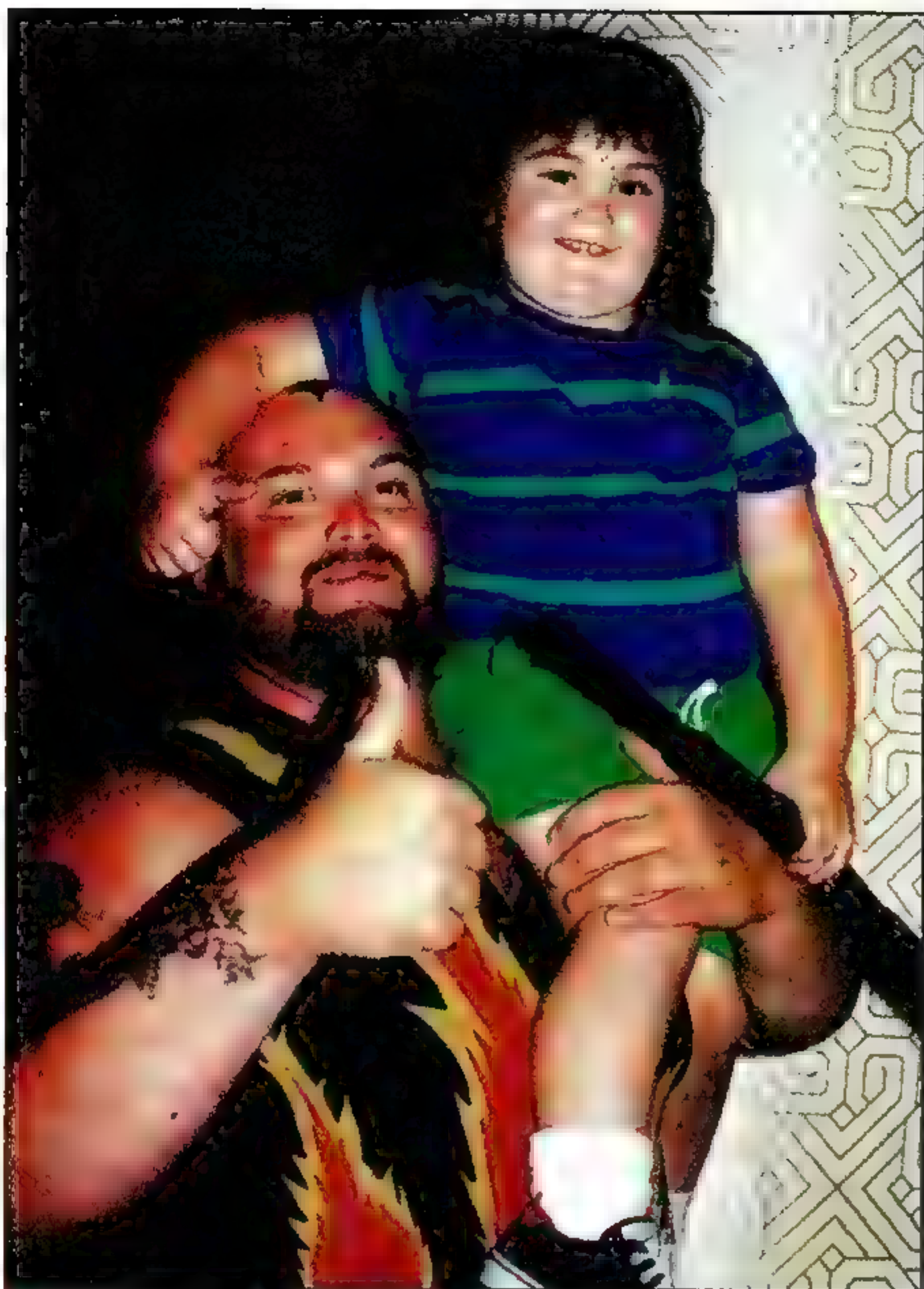
Where will Chris Jericho go next? Jericho is playing coy at the moment, admitting that he has received offers from WWE, TNA, and other wrestling companies. As of now, he's keeping his options open.

champion **Bill Goldberg** griped about TNA using his name on the air without his permission. Goldberg, who will be doing color commentary for Showtime's Mixed Martial Arts promotion, Elite XC, said he has no plans to be an active wrestler again. "It [annoys] me that as a promotion that somebody would do that. That is no big deal. It just gives me more of a reason to beat the hell out of them even more," said Goldberg.

Boris Zhukov is leading a benefit motorcycle ride to raise money for his son, **Wayne Harrell**, who was involved in a serious auto accident. Wayne accumulated over \$800,000 worth of medical bills while receiving treatment for severe heart trauma, third-degree burns, and many broken bones.

Former WWF and WCW World champion and 2006 WWE Hall of Fame inductee **Bret "The Hitman" Hart**, as well as former NWA World champion **Harley Race**, will be in attendance for the 42nd annual convention of the Cauliflower Alley Club to be held from April 19 to 21 at the Riviera Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas. This year's honorees at the annual awards banquet include legendary shooter **Danny Hodge**, former NWA President **Bob Geigel**, former Four Horsemen manager **James J. Dillon**, **Rock Riddle**, **Tito Carreon**, **Duke Myers**, **Bob Leonard**, "**Cowboy**" **Bob Kelly**, and **Laura Martinez**. Posthumous awards will go to **Yukon Eric** and **Betty Jo Hawkins**.

During his active career, WWE Hall of Famer **Pat Patterson** was used to performing in front of big crowds. But the company's first Intercontinental champion was on unfamiliar turf when he made his singing debut in front of thousands of onlookers at CanadaFest in Hollywood Beach, Florida. He performed the songs "Cuando, Cuando" and "My Way," and then did his best Louie Armstrong impression with "What A Wonderful World." Prior to CanadaFest, Patterson had never sung before an audience larger than a karaoke night bar crowd.



Bam Bam Bigelow will be missed by his family, friends, and many fans. Bigelow, pictured with his son in this 1991 photo, was honored with two memorial services, one in his native New Jersey and another in his adopted home state of Florida.

Another WWE Hall of Famer, **Sgt. Slaughter**, recently did a guest spot at an Arizona Sundogs hockey game. He got a moderate ovation. As part of an angle, fans were asked to identify Slaughter's famous finishing hold (the cobra clutch). When the winning fan guessed correctly, the Sarge feigned congratulating him and then turned heel, applying the cobra clutch. He then revealed he was wearing a T-shirt featuring the logo of the visiting team.

Joanie Laurer continues to make the daytime talk show rounds. Most recently, she appeared on *The Tyra Banks Show* with several fellow VH-1 *Surreal Life* cast members.

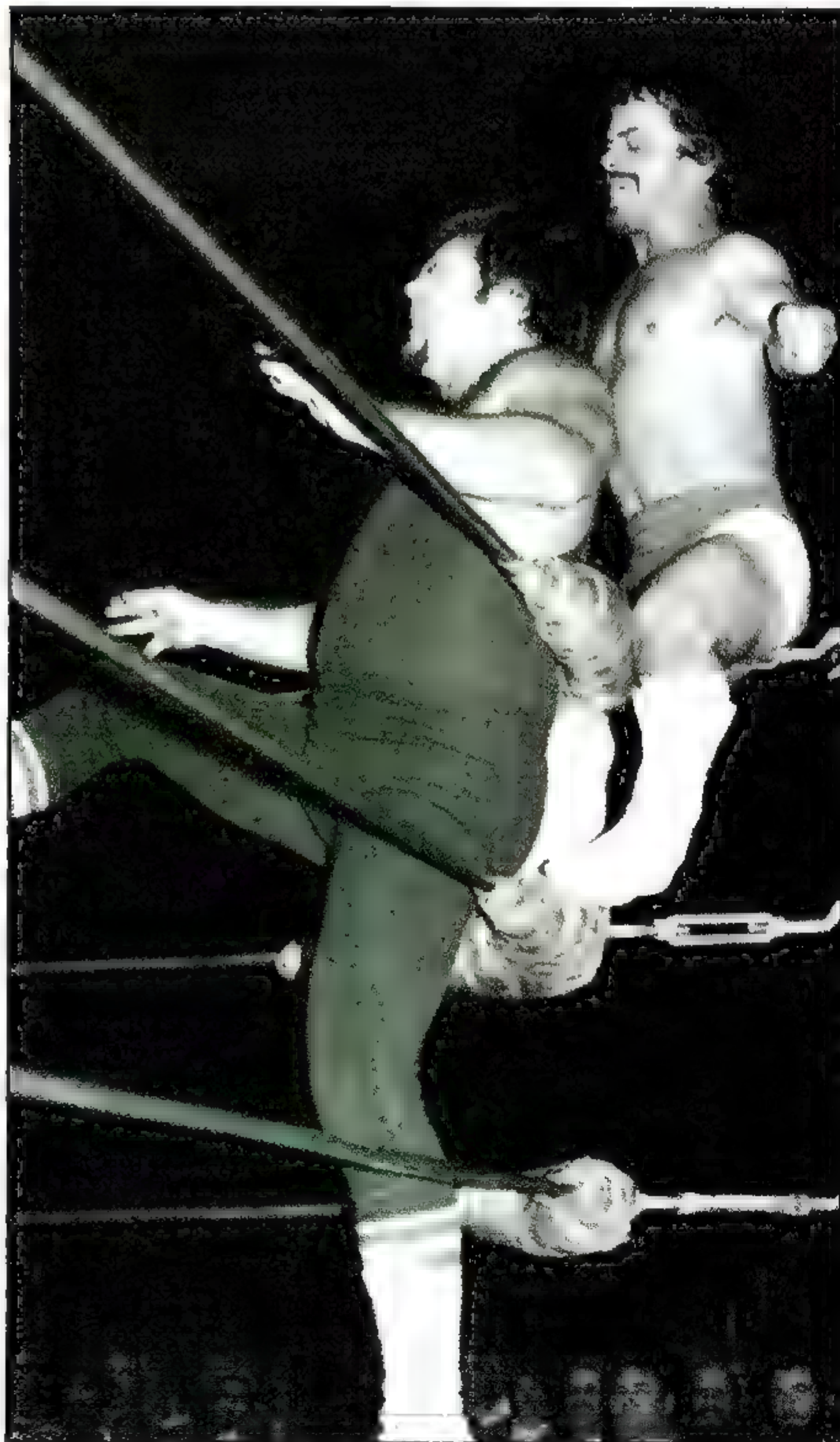
Dan Gable, considered the greatest amateur wrestler in history, recently testified in front of the Iowa State Legislature, voicing his support for an insurance-reform bill giving government-sponsored incentives for companies that help their employees stay in shape and quit smoking.

Old grudges die hard in the world of wrestling, both in and out of the ring. In one of the strangest lawsuits on record, **Dara Singh** recently appeared in court in India in a dispute over a canceled card—from 1982! Singh, a legend in his homeland, was best known for his matches with the late **Lou Thesz** during the 1950s and '60s.

Although final toxicology reports were not announced

as of press time, early indications are the death of **Bam Bam Bigelow** was related to complications from diabetes. Bigelow, who grappled for years with painkiller dependency, was battling a persistent infection in the weeks leading up to his untimely passing. Two services were held for the popular Bigelow—a funeral in his home state of New Jersey and a church memorial service in his adopted home of New Port Richey, Florida. Local wrestlers who got to know Bigelow during his final years organized the Florida service.

Longtime midget wrestling favorite **Cowboy Lang** passed away in Portland, Oregon. Primarily active from the late-1960s to late-1980s, he worked spot shows around the country, most recently wrestling in 1998. Reports of his age varied between 60 and 70. A well-liked man, he unfortunately fell on hard times during the last decade of his life. □



Cowboy Lang had to climb to the top turnbuckle to get a height advantage over Jerry Lawler in this mixed tag team match. Although Lang was no Rey Mysterio Jr., his colorful antics made him one of the most entertaining stars ever. He passed away on January 4.

in focus

By Dave Lenker

MEMORIES OF A BEAST

I didn't know Scott "Bam Bam" Bigelow very well. He wasn't a good source for me during his days in the WWF, WCW, or ECW. I don't even remember the last time I saw him in action, and I can't tell you that I have a favorite Bigelow match. But since I heard about his death, I've wondered a lot about how wrestling history will remember him.

To call him an incredibly agile super heavyweight who was a player during parts of the two most recent wrestling boons doesn't really tell the tale. He did share a ring quite often with Hulk Hogan during the 1980s in the WWF ... and he was one of Bill Goldberg's arch-rivals in WCW in the late-1990s. He was a big star, but not a huge star. I'm not sure why he never won a world championship (he held the ECW heavyweight title for six weeks in 1997, but that was before *PWI* recognized it as a world title).

How you judge Bigelow's career depends on whether you're a glass-half-full or glass-half-empty type of person, I suppose.

When someone—famous or not—dies, it's standard operating procedure for those close to that person (or in the case of a famous person, those who covered that person's career) to focus on the positives and downplay or forget the negatives. I'm too young to remember much of Gerald R. Ford's presidency, but I always thought his presidency was rather undistinguished ... until he died late last year and the superlatives came out in force.

I've read a lot of nice things about Bigelow since his death, and I don't doubt that he was a very good man to those who knew him best. However, some of my most vivid memories of Bigelow were not those

of a very pleasant man. In retrospect, I couldn't blame Bigelow for resenting the fact that some of those on the *PWI* staff regularly referred to him as an underachiever in the early-1990s. Was that fair? He did have the size, the look, the ability, and the intensity to accomplish a hell of a lot ...

I did my best to eliminate that word from *PWI* and its sister magazines during my time as editor-in-chief. Sometimes stars in all sports are labeled underachievers simply because they don't live up to the hype that they had no part in creating. In wrestling, you need to have a promoter behind you in order to skyrocket to the very top. It's not all ability. Still, in Bigelow's case, you could



The closest Bam Bam Bigelow ever came to becoming a dominant main-eventer was during his ECW tenure (pictured, against Pit Bull II). Unfortunately, after his loss to Lawrence Taylor at WrestleMania XI, all anyone could remember was that he never held WWF gold and that he lost to a football player.

make the argument that the ugly 13-letter "u"-word fit.

Then there was L.T. in 1995. I'm not sure Bigelow ever forgave us for burying him for that infamous loss at WrestleMania XI. Hell, he lost to a football player in front of millions. What were we to do back then, praise him? Okay, he was responsible for that match coming off far better than "not completely embarrassing," which is what you have to hope for when a non-wrestler, even an all-time NFL great, wrestles. That whole storyline was fun to watch, too, and it happened during an era in the WWF that wasn't always so entertaining.

In the years that followed, Bigelow was grudgingly cooperative with us at times, anything but cooperative at other times. You probably don't care much about that, and you shouldn't. If he entertained you, you'll remember him fondly. If he didn't, then you won't.

I was saddened to read parts of an interview that Bigelow did with the *St. Petersburg Times* in Florida 14 months before his death. Life after wrestling wasn't particularly good to him.

"Being Bam Bam Bigelow is a pain ... You did this the first half of your life and now this is the second half, and now you're bruised and battered. So what the hell can you do?" he said.

I'm still not sure how to look at Bigelow's career, but it's incredibly sad that we're discussing it at all right now.

MONTY BROWN, TAKE II

Marcus Cor Von?

Unless there's an inside joke in there somewhere, I'm wondering which member of WWE Creative came up with Monty Brown's ECW moniker and exactly how long it took he or she to think of it.

Really rolls off the tongue, doesn't it? Much better than that cumbersome "Monty Brown" that was so hard to spell and remember. I can only guess that Mr. Von didn't accomplish enough pre-WWE to

earn the right to keep his name. Yet he gets to keep his "Alpha Male" nickname—go figure. When you look over his resume (a resume that also includes some NFL experience), you don't see a whole lot.

It hit me as I thought about Bam Bam Bigelow and watched Marcus make his first few appearances in ECW that, for now at least, he qualifies as an underachiever. It's far too early to make such a harsh judgment of a man who won this magazine's Rookie of the Year honors just two years ago. Don't forget, it's only been about two years since we stopped wondering when Brown was going to annihilate Jeff Jarrett and take his rightful place as the dominant, handpicked, homegrown NWA World champion whom TNA needed so desperately.

Some head-scratching booking, some contract disputes, and some limitations in the still-learning "Alpha Male's" game squashed that plan, which wasn't ever necessarily an official plan but, instead, a bunch of assumptions, a little wishful thinking, and plenty of hype. TNA brass likely saw Brown as a potential NWA champion, but nothing more. We wanted the more.

Here's Cor Von's chance to start all over again, and it'll be his only chance to do that.

In choosing to move from TNA to WWE, he shows that he is committed to becoming as good a pro wrestler as he can be. I'm pretty certain he's getting more money in WWE, but in taking that deal, he's also committing to a much more ambitious schedule.

My initial reaction to "The Alpha Male" debuting for ECW as opposed to Raw or Smackdown was that it was a bad decision on Vince McMahon's part. A wrestler can go only so far in ECW as it's set up now. However, after watching Cor Von's first two

ECW matches—both impressive squashes—and giving it a little more thought, I think this might work out in the long run.

Instead of pushing him as a huge new star right from the start, take the slower approach, don't put him in a position in which he is likely to fail, and figure out just how far along in his development he truly is. Push him too quickly when he isn't ready and he might never fully recover. But give him a few months in ECW and reassess. Then perhaps we'll know if he's ready for the red or the blue team, and WWE can figure out a way to move him to one of those rosters.

I have a feeling that I won't be calling Monty "Marcus Cor Von" Brown an underachiever again ... not that I'll be looking to use that word in any context in this column again. □



Monty Brown was often reprimanded by TNA for his lackadaisical attitude toward wrestling, but, for some reason, WWE has decided to take a chance on him anyway, renaming him Marcus Cor Von.

off the top rope

By Brandi Mankiewicz

If you wish to contribute to Brandi's mailbox, send your letters to:
TOP ROPE Box 1148 Ft. Washington, PA 19034
 Or send e-mail to: offthetopope@yahoo.com

(Editor's note: The opinions expressed in this column are those of the letter writers and Brandi Mankiewicz herself. They do not necessarily reflect the editorial views of this magazine.)

IM DREADING THE next phone call I get. I'm losing too many of my friends. Doug Gentry passed away on January 26. Most of you probably never heard of him. Doug was one of the silent background guys this business so desperately needs. From ECW to ROH, Doug was always there, doing grunt work and whatever else was required of him. Most fans wouldn't even know his name if it wasn't for his brief ownership of ROH a few years ago. I knew Doug as the smiling blond who was always waiting for me with a hug at any venue where I would see him. I'll miss that.

Doug's passion was wrestling. He enjoyed being around it and he enjoyed the people involved in it. One of the coolest things about Doug was that he was my age, so our conversations would span two decades of wrestling without losing each other.

Now it seems strange that I just had a dream involving Doug. He was the bartender at a little dive in Key West where Dan Shacket and I were relaxing and trading stories about the PWI staff. Dirty little secrets were being aired, but it was all good. The three of us were laughing while enjoying the breeze coming from Cuba as a spectacular sunset was occurring in the west. I never got the chance to tell him about it.

Doug, see you in another life, brother. Until then, I remain your champion.

Brandi,

I am concerned about "Nature Boy" Ric Flair. I have been a wrestling fan for over 20 years and eventually broke into the business myself. When do you think WWE will induct Flair into the Hall of Fame? Will that have to wait until after he dies? I know his personal life has gone to hell these past few years and that he still needs this job, but having Kenny Dykstra beat Flair over and over again just doesn't seem right.

I know Flair gets criticized for reaching close to 60 and not hanging up the boots, but the guy still is entertaining. I would much rather see this 57-year-old go crazy on Mick Foley than watch guys like Three-Minute Warning's Jamall—oh, I mean Umaga—finish off jobbers with a thumb move. If you see this plea, WWE, don't kill the legacy of Ric Flair. Induct this man into the Hall of Fame before it's too late!

C.J.

cfiber@hotmail.com

C.J.,

For someone who claims to honor history and legends, why is it that you mock the

Samoan thumb of doom? As for Ric Flair, yes, he's a legend, but one must remember that the bulk of what makes "Naitch" a legend happened in a promotion not liked by WWE. Sure, Vince has given a backhanded compliment to his former arch-enemies by either buying their tape archives or mentioning their highlights from time to time, but by no means does that count as full-blown acknowledgement.

Given Flair's rich, storied career, I do think he should be in the Hall of Fame instead of the ring. I'd rather see him in expensive suits, strutting and crowing about his various conquests while receiving a plaque. Instead, we're just treated to him and his manboobs flapping in the wind while he's schooling yet another kid younger than his own children.



Photo by Christine Coons

Doug Gentry was one of those behind-the-scenes (and often behind-the-camera) guys that the fans know little about but who are so vital to the success of this business. Doug passed away in January, and I will miss him dearly. He was a good man and a good friend.

Brandi,

In the March issue, you asked wrestling fans to tell you what they want to see. I'm a wrestling fan, so here's what I want:

I want good storyline rivalries, like the ones between 1997 and 2000. I want more badasses, like Samoa Joe, Kurt Angle, and Steve Austin. I want deserving champions, like The Undertaker, Kane, C.M. Punk, Ken Kennedy, and Chris Benoit. I want good rivalries, like Rock-Austin, Angle-Joe, and Benoit-Jericho. I don't want to see anymore stupid backstage skits. I want clear winners in matches, not run-ins. I want a real tag team division in WWE. I want more hardcore matches, circa 1999 and 2000. Lastly, I want Vince to retire and hand the company to Shane O'Mac. Maybe he is the only person who can save WWE.

TY WHARTON
Sioux Falls, SD

Ty,

Ahem! Written like a true wrestling fan. It's interesting to find that the majority of readers who answered my call to action shared your sentiments. It seems that you all (*gasp!*) want just good, no-holds-barred wrestling. Now there's a shocker. While I'd change the timeline to include the mid-1980s, I still understand why you picked the time range that you did. It was still a good time for wrestling.

Now, I was agreeing with most of what you had written until the last part. Yes, Vince McMahon does need to retire, but I think the choice of Shane McMahon as the next in line isn't a good one. I'm not sure his sister is, either. And, no, I will not consider the position if asked.

Brandi,

Isn't it about time the magazines you work for actually use the phrase [*editor's note: first name omitted*] Mahoney?

Thanks,
JOHNNY HEDGEPEETH
staggolee@msn.com

Dear Johnnnnnny,

Not going to happen. Our esteemed publisher, Stu Saks, made the call after posing this hypothetical question: Would we print a female name based on a body part that some might consider "private"? At the time, he cited Francine. Now, use your imaginations and come up with a body part (or two) that some promoter might have wanted to accentuate. His question—and it was a good one—was, would we print [*editor's note: first name omitted*] Francine?

*Letter of the Month
(printed verbatim from
actual letters to share
my torture with you all):*

Dearest Brandi

I am a 38 year old man who has been a wrestling fan since 1982, and there have been times when I have thought up better storylines than WWE creative has, please read over what I recently came up with and let me know what you think. Any critiques and comments are welcomed. My storyline ideas below has to do with the recent WWE Tag Title switch.

According to sources behind the scenes at WWE, the main reason behind the tag titles being dropped to Cena and Michaels is because WWE officials want to play on the comment that was made awhile ago by Triple H about Randy Orton being gay, and they want to push Randy to become romantically involved with Edge, which will make Edge the heel in this storyline, due to the fact that Randy will be playing the outspoken face that gets dumped on by Edge. WWE is also considering bringing Vito over to Raw from Smackdown



To answer Johnnnny Hedgepeth's question, no, we refuse to have the brass ... audacity ... to refer to this guy from Nutley, New Jersey, as anything other than Mahoney. Hey, at least we have standards.

to come to Orton's rescue during a very violent and bloody match to take place at this year's Wrestlemania between Edge and Orton which will result in a partnership between the two. This will be very interesting to see where WWE takes this one.

Thanks for reading
JIM BLAIRE

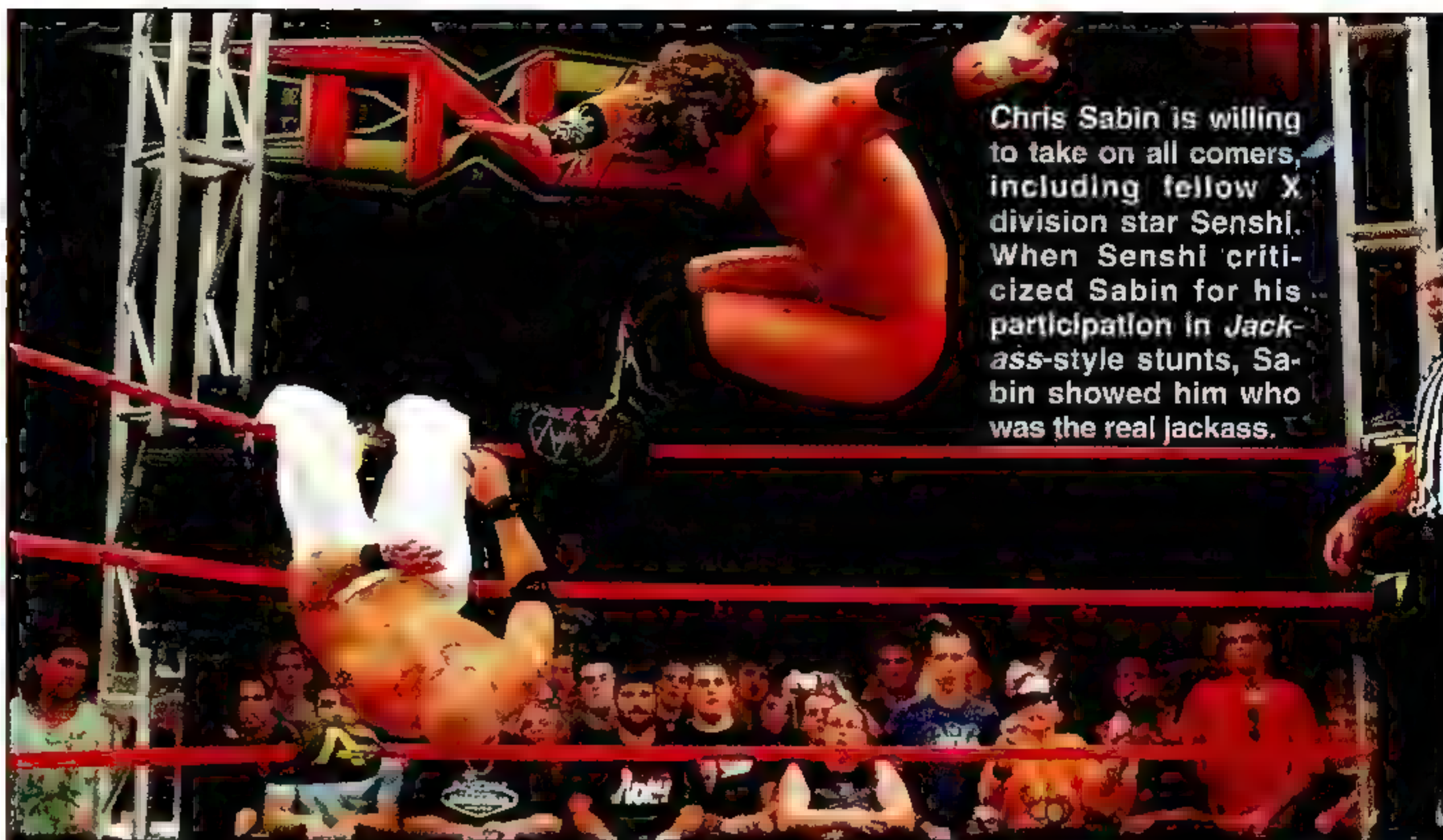
jim_blaire@yahoo.com

P.S. Permission to print in PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED is completely granted.

Dear Readers,

This is exactly why fans should not be armchair athletes. WWE Creative might not thrill you with its hair-brained schemes, but they're a hell of a lot better than this guy's. In the immortal words of Bugs Bunny, "Whatta Maroon!" □

press conference...



Chris Sabin is willing to take on all comers, including fellow X division star Senshi. When Senshi criticized Sabin for his participation in Jack-ass-style stunts, Sabin showed him who was the real jackass.

CHRIS SABIN

Photos by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

WRESTLING HISTORY IS filled with promising young wrestlers who never rose above the mid-card level because they failed to take charge of their career direction. Ambitious four-time TNA X division champion Chris Sabin was determined not to let that happen to him, even if that meant turning against his friends and becoming a heel.

To hear Sabin tell it, "The Future" was tired of waiting for the respect he felt he deserved.

The 25-year-old stewed after X division pioneer Jerry Lynn publicly questioned his focus in an interview with Christy Hemme. Sabin fired back with pointed comments directed at Lynn.

Shortly thereafter—with little outward provocation—Sabin abandoned Sonjay Dutt as he was attacked by Samoa Joe and challenged the popular Christopher Daniels. The move paid off when Sabin captured the X division championship at Final Resolution after opportunistically pouncing on and pinning Lynn in a triple-threat match. According to Sabin, the victory validated his assertion that he is the top star in the highly competitive division.

Sabin recently sat down with Senior Writer Frank Krewda and Contributing Writers Bill Meltzer and Al Alven to discuss his sudden change of heart and the effect his heel turn has had on his fan support. He also had candid comments on the state of the X division and TNA and his plans for the future.

FRANK KREWDA: Chris, as a four-time X division champion, how would you compare your most recent reign with the others?

CHRIS SABIN: Well, the first one was pretty special, because I was just 21 years old and it was my biggest accomplishment up to that point. The X division opened a lot of people's eyes, and I was a big part of that. But I'd have to say the most recent one is the best one so far, because I'm wrestling better now than I ever did before.

AL ALVEN: How so?

SABIN: A more cerebral approach, a lot less wasted energy. I

NWA World title picture. I was happy to be in the background. Instead of politicking, I went out and did something about it.

BILL MELTZER: By turning heel?

SABIN: If that's what you want to call it. I call it being man enough to stand up for myself.

KREWDA: You were criticized by ex-champion Senshi and Jerry Lynn for hurting the X division's image by participating in Jackass-type stunts to help promote the movie to the TNA audience. Did those criticisms stick in your craw?

Look, maybe some people buy into that old idea that a good big man will always beat a good little man. But it's a b.s. cliché. The truth is that I've taken on much bigger guys and done fine.

don't feel like I have to show my whole repertoire of moves to have a great match.

ALVEN: A few years ago, Samoa Joe said you were consistently one of the best pound-for-pound wrestlers in the business. Do you think you've been underrated?

SABIN: What I think is that there were people in this company who thought that, because I didn't complain every time someone else got pushed in the X division or

SABIN: Here's the thing, Frank. If they have a problem with me or my attitude, come tell me to my face. Don't stand up on TV and cut a promo on me to show what a "serious" wrestler you are. Man up, dawg!

Every issue, reporters from PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED will participate in an incisive press conference with a top wrestling star. The questions will be demanding. And the answers will reveal the innermost thoughts of the giants of the sport.





Sabin is relishing this X title reign more so than his previous three, although former friends such as Jay Lethal and Sonjay Dutt are no longer around. Now, being a more skilled and experienced wrestler, he relies on his intelligence as much as his physical ability—and he also breaks the rules.

ALVEN: But did that merit a full-fledged turn?

SABIN: Like I said before, I was just standing up for myself. Was Christopher Daniels there to stand up for me? No. Was Sonjay Dutt there? No. They were out for themselves. That's fine. I've got no problem with that. But don't criticize me for looking out for myself. I saw some things going on that I didn't like. It was time for a change. Otherwise I was in danger of going backward and getting lost in the shuffle. Instead, I won the X division championship again, and

it's "Hail Sabin!" like it should be.

MELTZER: I've heard you say in the past that Hulk Hogan and Bret Hart were your wrestling heroes when you were growing up. Those are guys who definitely made a dramatic change in their early career direction before their careers truly took off.

SABIN: Yeah, exactly.

MELTZER: Have you drawn inspiration from their careers?

SABIN: You mean recently? No. I've got my own thing going on. But I see the connection you're drawing here. I was starting to get over-

looked and did something about it. That's what champions do. Bret Hart was working opening matches in the WWF as a babyface before the Hart Foundation opportunity came along. There was no turn on TV. Bret just decided to go in a different direction, and he did. The rest is history. There was no holding him back after that. Same thing with Hogan. He got the offer to do *Rocky III* and told the WWF to go scratch when they told him he couldn't. That was the very beginning of the birth of "Hulkamania." Was that a coincidence?

KREWDA: Are you saying your heel turn and latest X division championship will really mean that much to your career?

SABIN: I don't want to think that far down the line. I just keep to my short-term goals and see where that gets me. I'm proud of the X division and what I've accomplished, no matter what Lynn or Senshi or Daniels would have you believe. Now, I want to build on that.

ALVEN: Would you rate Daniels as your toughest current opponent?

SABIN: I'll give credit where credit is due. Daniels is very dangerous every time he steps in the ring, and I have to be at my best to beat him. But, when I bring my A-game, I'm just a little bit better. The same goes for Jay Lethal, Lynn, and the rest.

KREWDA: A.J. Styles is another guy who has changed direction recently from fan favorite to heel. Have you talked to him about his own motivations? And, since he is a guy who has both teamed up with and feuded with Daniels, have you picked Styles' brain about strategy for facing Daniels on a regular basis?

SABIN: It's every man for himself out there. I think A.J. realized that right around the same time as I did. So what's there to talk about with him? Besides, I know Daniels' style just as well as Styles does. I have my own book on Daniels—

The X champ credits Christopher Daniels as one of his most dangerous opponents. Other noted formidable competitors include Jay Lethal, Senshi, and Jerry Lynn, but Sabin says he can beat anyone when he's on top of his game.

and on Styles, too, for that matter.

MELTZER: The current trend is for X division wrestlers to use the division as a springboard to jump into the NWA title picture—following the example of Samoa Joe and Styles. So far, you've pretty much remained an exclusive X division competitor. Is there a point where you're concerned of being labeled as someone who can compete only at that level?

SABIN: You mean because I'm a smaller guy? Look, maybe some people buy into that old idea that a good big man will always beat a good little man. But it's a b.s. cliché. The truth is that I've taken on much bigger guys and done fine. I matched Samoa Joe move for move during his time in the X division. When [Kevin] Nash thought he could come in and walk all over the X division, I was the one who stood up to him. So to answer your question, I've already shown what I can do against guys who aren't typical X division wrestlers. Joe is one of the biggest badasses on the planet. So do you really think I'd be worried by taking on someone like Sting or Christian Cage?

ALVEN: You've always had a loyal Internet fan base, and it's well-known that you're a wrestler who enjoys interacting with fans on the Net. Has there been any backlash from those folks?

SABIN: I think most fans today, at least my fans, are smart enough to realize a change in direction from face to heel—or vice versa—is a career move, not a personality change. Look, I came into TNA as a so-called heel. Most guys switch back and forth several times in their careers. If someone's gonna hold it against me for doing what I need to do, well, they've got the problem. I'm cool with where my career is headed now. □

In Sabin's mind, size really doesn't matter. He is willing to battle the best of the big talent in TNA, including Kevin Nash and Samoa Joe. Nash probably still remembers this wicked legdrop.



The 2007 *PWI* Poll

WRESTLING'S 50 BURNING QUESTIONS ANSWERED!

SECTION COMPILED BY JAKE BLACK



Photo by Lee South / TNA Wrestling

A.J. Styles, despite his poor change in attitude, proved that he was the best wrestler, pound-for-pound, in the world, according to *PWI* readers. Samoa Joe and Christopher Daniels may be tempted to agree with that.



Think Randy Orton heard about our poll? Here, Orton—who placed second in our “Sexiest Man” category—seems to be taking out his frustrations on the sport’s number-one pretty boy, Raw World champion John Cena. Orton and Edge split the Rated RKO vote.

FROM TIME TO time over the years, PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED has sought the informed insight of wrestling “insiders” for a poll that has explored current trends in wrestling, and predicted where the industry was headed. In the past, we’ve sent out nearly 200 letters and e-mails to members of the wrestling community for the purpose of compiling these surveys. This year, however, the staff at *PWI* took a different approach. We sent surveys to 200 *PWI* subscribers for the bulk of the poll, only calling upon insiders to answer the final 10 questions, otherwise known as our “Best Of The Best” section, regarding holds and maneuvers.

“We considered sampling the views of the sport’s insiders again,” said Editor-in-Chief Harry Burkett, “but after discussing the matter at length, we came to the conclusion that the fans, particularly informed *PWI* readers, offer the view of the consumer, which is paramount to the success of any business. Consider our readers a ‘focus group,’ willing to spend their hard-earned money on the sport they love, but also yearning for the opportunity to voice their opinions.”

And that they did. Before we tallied the votes, our assumption was that *PWI* subscribers would be a more optimistic group than the insiders we polled in the past. For the most part, we were wrong. With no political bias, they had no reason to express anything but their true feelings.

“Keep in mind,” Burkett noted, “that this is not a poll of all *PWI* readers. These are *PWI* subscribers, many of whom have been so for years, and they are a little less casual than the casual fan.”

Perhaps their overview of the sport is understandable. The new ECW’s disappointing start and questionable storylines on Raw fueled our respondents’ surly mood, with two notable exceptions. Fans are seeing great potential and momentum with TNA and WWE’s Smackdown brand. In 2006, Smackdown experienced a critical turnaround while TNA debuted in prime time and amassed an ever-growing audience. Add to that the influx of talent for both of those rosters, and our subscribers felt those two shows represented the brightest hope for the future of wrestling. Conversely, an overwhelming majority said they thought the ECW brand would not end the year with any appreciable momentum.

Ultimately, there are many reasons to watch wrestling. Our subscribers (whose poll results were returned in the third week of December) are loyal fans of the sport and hope that the top brass at TNA and WWE will see where their most successful courses lay. One thing’s for sure: 2007 will be a huge year in wrestling as the top companies try to learn from past mistakes and build upon their current successes. While our respondents present a murky picture, there are still a number of bright rays of hope for the entire industry.

The 2007 PWI Poll

1. WHO IS, POUND-FOR-POUND, THE BEST WRESTLER IN THE WORLD?

In our 2005 poll, it was a virtual tie for first and second between Chris Benoit and A.J. Styles. This year, the fans have spoken, and the undisputed winner is A.J. Styles. Benoit had been in the top spot for years, according to our insider experts, but this year's random sampling of *PWI* subscribers voted Styles the best. Benoit is still up there, but Styles' ever-increasing arsenal of moves makes him the man. The Kurt Angle-Samoa Joe feud was intense, and their series of matches could have put one of them in the top position, as each man showed his extensive talents in the ring. They really brought out the best in each other. Their feud started a little too late in 2006 for them to gain enough momentum in this category, however.

A.J. Styles	33%
Chris Benoit	27%
C.M. Punk	20%
Samoa Joe	5%
Others	5%

2. IF YOU COULD WATCH THE MATCHES OF ONLY ONE WRESTLER, WHOM WOULD YOU CHOOSE?

Like the previous category, Chris Benoit has dominated this one in the recent past, but a change is indeed afoot. Perhaps it was his surprise cash-in of his money-in-the-bank title shot and taking the belt off John Cena, or maybe it was his Raw World title defense at ECW One Night Stand. Then again, it might have been his bloody hardcore matches at WrestleMania and One Night Stand or his bitter, violent feud with DeGeneration X. The "Rated R Superstar" delivered some tremendous matches in 2006. (Let's not forget his live sex celebration, either ... okay, maybe forget it, but we will not ignore it.) In any case, many of our *PWI* subscribers believed that Edge—when he was "on"—was a main-eventer worth seeing.



Fans prefer "Rated R" matches



Styles finally receives top recognition

Edge	28%
A.J. Styles	23%
Kurt Angle	18%
Samoa Joe	16%
Chris Benoit	9%
Others	6%

3. WOULD YOU JUDGE WRESTLING'S IMMEDIATE FUTURE AS HOPELESS, CLOUDY, STATUS QUO, PROMISING, OR SHINING?

Impact's new prime time slot was often mentioned as the major factor that would play a part in a wrestling renaissance. And it wasn't so much because TNA's product was so great (although many respondents thought it was), but the mere presence of an alternative to WWE was enough reason to be optimistic about the future. Also, many respondents specifically mentioned C.M. Punk and Samoa Joe as reasons for optimism. And that wasn't so much because readers believed they were inevitably headed for megastar status, but because they represented a return to the ground-and-pound, more realistic form of wrestling. And reasons for pessimism? The lackluster December to Dismember pay-per-view, along with the departures of Paul Heyman and Trish Stratus, were all reasons for readers to feel let down at the close of 2006.

Promising	34%
Status Quo	32%
Cloudy	17%
Shining	17%

4. WHO IS WRESTLING'S SEXIEST WOMAN?

Perhaps we should have titled asked, "Who is wrestling's sexiest woman that is *still* in wrestling?" The most popular answers were Trish Stratus and Lita, both of whom are gone from the sport. In addition, Jackie Gayda is taking time off, several Divas were fired, and there weren't many hot up-and-comers. Christy Hemme reinvented herself as an announcer in TNA, and a sexy one at that. But, our fans were loyal to Trish and Lita. Stratus' first-place finish in the poll continues a multi-year trend for her. Obviously, fans are sentimental, and they wanted to give it up for "Stratusfaction" one last time.

Trish Stratus	55%
Lita	23%
Christy Hemme	12%
Kelly Kelly	10%



Gone, but still in the minds of male fans

The 2007 PWI Poll

5. WHO IS WRESTLING'S SEXIEST MAN?

He might have been booed out of the Hammerstein Ballroom, but, as Mick Foley has been known to point out, when was the last time you saw a woman at an ECW show? Male hardcore enthusiasts hated John Cena, and they let him know it. But the ovations he got from his female fans could often drown out the boos. Maybe *The Marine* would have done better at the box office if it had been a chick flick, catering to the feminine mystique. Cena's clean-cut manner and chiseled good looks made him the subject of many a woman's dream in 2006 by a large margin. It wasn't even close in the voting.

John Cena	36%
Randy Orton	21%
Edge	20%
Batista	10%
Others	13%

6. WHO IS WRESTLING'S BEST TV ANNOUNCER?

For years, he was the voice of the "real" ECW, and he climbed the ladder of success in the industry until he landed the top announcer's job in all of wrestling: that of play-by-play announcer on Raw. Though Joey Styles' talents were stifled in the Raw announcing booth, he was solid on the mike, and our fans will never forget his promo in May, quitting the Raw job, decrying the state of "sports entertainment." Styles' return to the new ECW is more reminiscent of his work on Raw than on the original ECW, but he still brings vast knowledge and passion to the sport when he calls a match—even if it is The Sandman vs. The Zombie. Even though Jim Ross (the man he had temporarily replaced at the Raw desk) reclaimed his job, Styles proved that 2006 was his year, and our fans noticed.



Ladies' Man, John Cena



Fans prefer Styles to J.R.—by a slim margin

Joey Styles	38%
Jim Ross	36%
Mike Tenay	19%
Michael Cole	4%
Others	3%

7. WOULD YOU GAUGE THE GENERAL PUBLIC'S PERCEPTION OF WRESTLING AS POOR, MEDIOCRE, GOOD, OR EXCELLENT?

How many non-wrestling fans still refer to WWE as "the WWF"? How many have even heard of TNA? If they have, what is their first thought when hearing the company's name? Or are Kevin Federline and movies about eye-gouging monsters considered bigger news? Apparently, in spite of the efforts by the biggest companies in our sport, public perception (as perceived by *PWI* readers) is still poor. It's possible that gimmicks such as Cryme Tyme—with its racial stereotypes—and "Extreme Strip Poker" make being a wrestling fan a little more embarrassing. It's unfortunate, too, because the talents of athletes such as A.J. Styles, Rob Van Dam, and many others go unnoticed because the perception of the industry is so poor. What would make it excellent? Unfortunately, wrestling may be too stigmatized to be fully accepted by the general public anytime soon.

Poor	44%
Good	37%
Mediocre	10%
Excellent	9%



Is today's wrestling about the athletes—or B-list celebrities and half-naked Divas?



The mainstream media ignores wrestling's positive contributions

8. WOULD YOU DESCRIBE MAINSTREAM COVERAGE OF WRESTLING AS POOR, MEDIOCRE, GOOD, OR EXCELLENT?

What's the difference between the poor public perception of wrestling and the mainstream media's mediocre coverage of the business? The only difference seems to be that the mainstream media enjoys it when celebrities jump inside the ring. Whether it's Kevin Federline, the soon-to-be ex-husband of Britney Spears, or Brian Eckstein, a World Series MVP, the media likes

wrestling only when it involves non-wrestlers. In the final analysis, though, both the stars and the industry are mocked in the mainstream media, while noble wrestling-sponsored activities such as WWE's annual tribute to the troops are all but ignored because they aren't as easy to mock. It begs the question: Is it better to be mocked in the press or ignored altogether?

Mediocre	49%
Good	27%
Poor	15%
Excellent	9%

The 2007 PWI Poll



WWECW fails to please

9. HOW WOULD YOU RATE WWE'S HANDLING OF ECW?

When WWE released the *Rise And Fall Of ECW* DVD a couple of years ago, fans were relieved to see that it had a fair, balanced tone, with a focus on those individuals who were personally involved in ECW. After the first two One Night Stand pay-per-views, there was even hope that WWE had understood what ECW was and that the brand could be a good addition to the company. Then the new weekly show on Sci

Fi kicked off. And that was it. Vampires, zombies, and an influx of Raw and Smackdown main-eventers coming in for one-night shots hurt the show's credibility. It was like watching *WWF Superstars* from 1992. And many diehard ECW fans have turned away. The originals have all been buried, and a guy who mid-carded Smackdown is now the ECW champion. According to the vast majority of our respondents, WWE has bungled the ECW experiment and tainted a proud legacy.

Poor	48%
Mediocre	26%
Good	16%
Excellent	10%

10. IS WRESTLING BETTER OR WORSE THAN IT WAS FIVE YEARS AGO?

Kee in mind that this question required respondents to compare the year 2006 to 2001. While 2001 was a very exciting year from a journalistic point of view, in retrospect, it was a terrible year for wrestling. WCW and ECW both went out of business, and the WWF gained a virtual monopoly over the business. And, without the benefit of a brand extension, fans had to search hard to find any alternatives. But, at the end of 2006, WWE offered Raw, Smackdown, and ECW, TNA had a show in prime time, and Wrestling Society X was set to premiere on MTV. As a result, fans with basic cable had five distinct products at their fingertips. Wrestling was in a state of change in 2006, and that made it an exciting time.



Photo by Mike Lano

Wrestling is thriving—on MTV and beyond

Better	75%
Worse	22%
About the same	3%




Photo by George Napolitano

TEST VS. BOBBY LASHLEY
THE 2007 VERSION OF ECW

The 2007 PWI Poll



Where will he go from here?

11. WHAT WILL BE THE FATE OF PAUL HEYMAN?

For most of 2006, Paul Heyman watched as his baby, ECW, was essentially plundered by WWE. Frustrated with the creative concepts WWE was implementing in the new ECW, he walked (or was sent walking). Yet most of our readers feel that he'll be back with WWE at some point. Undoubtedly, he would be a tremendous asset to TNA, and could help make it a viable alternative. WWE executives know this and will do what they can to keep Heyman on their side. WWE, our fans predict, will make Heyman an offer he can't refuse, and he'll return to the company and possibly ECW. Is that the best choice? Who knows? It just seems the most likely.

Return to WWE	49%
Be signed by TNA	39%
Start his own wrestling company	7%
Leave wrestling altogether	5%

12. WILL KURT ANGLE STILL BE ABLE TO WRESTLE BY THE END OF 2007?

For years, Kurt Angle bragged that he won an Olympic gold medal with a "broken freakin' neck." Well, by August 2006, it seemed that his broken freakin' neck and other injuries had taken their toll on the former world champion, and he was walking away from wrestling to let them heal and spend time with his family. Less than a month later, however, Angle signed with TNA, and was again wrestling violent matches against dangerous men such as Samoa Joe. Despite TNA's easier schedule, our subscribers think that he'll be done with wrestling by the end of the year. Angle never does anything halfway, and therefore, his injury-prone body will be a liability in the year ahead. He won't survive his own intensity and will be forced into retirement by December. According to a majority of our respondents, that's true ... it's damn true.



Running his "freakin'" body into the "freakin'" ground

No	55%
Yes	45%

13. WILL TNA TURN A PROFIT IN 2007?

2007 will be the big year for TNA. Not only will they turn a profit, but many of our subscribers also believe that TNA will become a legitimate threat to WWE. With a licensing deal for toys and DVDs, and more merchandise than ever available from the company, TNA potentially has a bright financial future. The company recently sealed a deal to further its brand in new media endeavors as well. All of this seems to indicate that TNA will celebrate its fifth anniversary with its ledger book in the black. Will they become a billion-dollar powerhouse like WWE? Not in the near future. Still, most of our respondents believe TNA will turn a profit this year.

Yes	53%
No	43%
Don't Know	4%

14. WHAT WILL BECOME OF THE WWE WOMEN'S DIVISION IN 2007?

With Trish Stratus' retirement and Lita's departure, WWE has lost its best female athletes. Aside from current women's champion Mickie James and Victoria, WWE's remaining ladies have little ring acumen. It seems the WWE's Divas will be relegated to bra-and-panties gauntlet matches, gravy bowls, and pillow fights. There are, however, two potential stars on the horizon: Beth Phoenix (who had a brief stint on Smackdown in early-2006) and Nattie Neidhart (the daughter of Jim Neidhart). At press time, it appeared as if TNA were about to kick off a women's division, with the signing of Miss Tennessee (Jacquelyn) and the prospect signing free agent Amy Dumas (Lita).



Fading into obscurity

Get Worse	41%
Status Quo	32%
Get Stronger	27%

15. IF VINCE McMAHON RETIRES, WHO IS BEST QUALIFIED TO REPLACE HIM?

Most of our respondents believe that a booking committee would be the best route to take if Vince McMahon ever retired from the business. It's obvious that Stephanie and her husband, Triple-H, are being groomed for the job, but they aren't considered the most qualified by our subscribers. Fans think there should be more creative input, not less, and have responded that a committee would be best. Another alternative is Shane McMahon, though his creative involvement behind the scenes has been minimal. But there's still a relationship between WWE and both Eric Bischoff and Paul Heyman. Both men offered creative visions that threatened McMahon in the 1990s, and could take WWE into the future. The fact that they aren't members of the McMahon family would make either of them perfect for the job, but, for the same reason, would make them the least likely to get it.



These two can't do it alone

A committee comprised of all key players	57%
Stephanie McMahon and Triple-H	20%
Shane McMahon	13%
Paul Heyman or Eric Bischoff	10%

The 2007 PWI Poll



Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

Sting could make or break TNA ratings

16. WHAT WILL BE TNA'S TIME SLOT BY THE END OF 2007?

Whenever TNA has achieved a better time slot or better placement on the cable dial, it has made progress. Beginning with a weekly series of pay-per-view events, then a Monday afternoon series on Fox Sports Net, then two different late night slots on Spike TV, and finally a prime time spot on Spike, TNA has come a long way. And, in 2007, most of our readers predict TNA will continue that trend by expanding to two hours. TNA's audience continues to grow each week, and its talent pool is also expanding. As the growing alternative to WWE, TNA will need a two-hour time slot for its flagship program, *Impact*. Interestingly, there were quite a few respondents who believe that TNA would benefit greatly by going head-to-head with WWE on Monday nights. Wouldn't that be interesting!

Thursday, 9 p.m. to 11 p.m. Eastern	34%
Thursday, 9 p.m. to 10 p.m. Eastern	30%
Monday, 9 p.m. to 11 p.m. Eastern	26%
Canceled	10%

17. IF STING IS "THE FACE OF TNA" IN 2007, IS THAT GOOD OR BAD FOR TNA?

No other question was as polarizing, or as close in the results, as this one. Our readers either support Sting as TNA's biggest star or they don't. And they all seem to have the same rationale for why they said yes or no. Those who voted yes consistently replied that Sting is an icon of the business, and one of TNA's only talents with name and face recognition from wrestling's boom in the 1990s. Others argue that TNA is not WCW and should be focusing on its own up-and-coming stars, not those past their prime. While Sting has contributed much to the product, he hasn't carried the TNA banner like he did in WCW, and it may not be the best choice to give him that responsibility.

Good	49%
Bad	49%
Unsure	2%

AJ STYLES VS. RON KILLINGS

ANOTHER REASON TO WATCH IMPACT

Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

TNAWRESTLING.COM

TOTAL NONSENSE

DVD
VIDEO



The 2007 PWI Poll

18. WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING WILL BE THE BIGGEST STAR A YEAR FROM NOW?

Many subscribers told us that if this question had been asked before December to Dismember, their answer would have been C.M. Punk, but since that event, it has become obvious that WWE/ECW is pulling back Punk, despite his enormous popularity. As a result, A.J. Styles received the top spot. Although he spent most of 2006 out of the NWA World title picture, Styles has been the most consistent performer and one of the most popular wrestlers in TNA. As 2007 begins, Styles is developing a cockier persona and—after five years as a charter member of TNA—finally seems serious about becoming a permanent main-eventer. And, now that TNA is poised for its biggest year ever, Styles' timing couldn't be better.

A.J. Styles	41%
C.M. Punk	40%
Alex Shelley	15%
Paul Birchall	4%



Styles leads the pack

19. SHOULD WWE COMBINE ITS ROSTERS FOR HOUSE SHOWS?

When the brand extension began several years ago, not many believed WWE would be as committed to it as it is. Fans assumed it would be only a matter of time before the

brand extension ended, and there would be only one unified brand. But, today, most fans are glad that WWE remained committed to the brand extension and believe that Raw and Smackdown should always run separate house shows. With the addition of the ECW roster to Smackdown house shows, there was a momentary feeling that the brands would reconnect, but ultimately our subscribers said that shouldn't happen. While we certainly would like to see matches like King Booker against Shawn Michaels, the fact is, there are too many stars on a combined show, so it's better to leave the rosters separated for the time being.

No	60%
Yes	40%

20. WHO IS THE MOST UNDERRATED WRESTLER IN THE WORLD?

Alex Shelley wasn't the runaway choice, but he edged out William Regal to capture the top spot in this category. The fact that Shelley, an up-and-coming high-flyer in TNA, received about the same number of votes as Regal, a mat-based grappler in the twilight of his career in WWE, proves there was no obvious answer to this question. Many of the votes were intended to be messages to WWE, asserting that Regal, Shelton Benjamin, Paul London, and Charlie Haas deserved bigger pushes. Interestingly, London made a showing in our poll, although his Smackdown World tag team championship partner, Brian Kendrick, did not. With their votes, a number of subscribers vindicated TNA's recent push of X champion Chris Sabin, who received seven percent in the polling.



Shelley deserves more respect

Alex Shelley	19%	Chris Sabin	7%
William Regal	18%	Paul London	5%
Shelton Benjamin	15%	Charlie Haas	3%
Mistico	13%	Others	10%

21. WHO IS THE MOST OVERRATED WRESTLER IN THE WORLD?

This was a pretty close race, too, with a number of ECW's so-called "Extremists" making the list. But Khali was cited as the most overrated because of his call-up to Raw. One respondent commented, "The Great Khali can't speak on the mike, can't actually wrestle, and should never have been put on WWE's flagship show. The bottom line is that he has no talent, but has been given matches where he's been able to go over on some of the legends of the business, such as The Undertaker and Tommy Dreamer. Why? Because Vince McMahon likes the big guys." In perhaps a sad statement on the current state of wrestling, all four major champions—Smackdown World champion Batista, Raw World champion John Cena, ECW champion Bobby Lashley, and NWA World champion Christian Cage—all made our list.

The Great Khali	25%
Batista	21%
John Cena	19%
Hardcore Holly	10%
Bobby Lashley	9%
Christian Cage	5%
Kurt Angle	3%
The Sandman	2%
Others	6%



A waste of roster space

22. WHO IS WRESTLING'S BEST BRAWLER?

He's weird and mysterious, but, above all, he's the man that *PWI* subscribers think is the best brawler in wrestling today. It's the "Man-Monster," Abyss. There were some pretty good fights in wrestling in 2006, but none were as consistently violent as those with Abyss. It wasn't that long ago that he and Rhino destroyed the *Impact* set. Or how about the many times he rolled around in thumbtacks, crashed through tables, or fought outside the arena? No one, it seemed, could go toe-to-toe with the big man. While Samoa Joe's brawls with Kurt Angle were vicious, they weren't enough to earn him this title, probably because they were few and far between. Abyss, meanwhile, put a serious beating on his opponents all year long.



The "Man-Monster" is quite a brawler

Abyss	22%
Finlay	19%
Rhino	17%
Samoa Joe	15%
Tommy Dreamer	8%
Hardcore Holly	5%
Others	14%

The 2007 PWI Poll

23. WHO IS THE MOST DANGEROUS WRESTLER?

Edge was dangerous because he combined his sadism with a frightening degree of diabolical intelligence. Judging from the results of this question, Edge might have replaced Triple-H as WWE's "Cerebral Assassin." Edge showed his genius when he cashed in his money-in-the-bank title shot after Raw champ John Cena had barely survived an "Elimination Chamber" match a few minutes earlier. But having left Cena, Mick Foley, Tommy Dreamer, Terry Funk, Ric Flair, Shawn Michaels, and Triple-H each in a bloody pile in 2006, Edge proved he not only knew when to strike, but how. Brains and brawn are a deadly combination, and Edge has them both. No one is safe from this dangerous combatant.

Edge	24%
Abyss	22%
Kane	19%
Randy Orton	12%
The Undertaker	6%
The Great Khali	6%
Mick Foley	3%
Others	8%



Bringing matches to the Edge of danger

24. WHO GIVES THE BEST INTERVIEWS?

They were certainly a different pair than when they first debuted a decade ago, but DeGeneration X showed why they've been at the top of the wrestling world, whether together or apart, for years," enthused one subscriber. The majority of our respondents agreed that Triple-H and Shawn Michaels are dynamite on the mike. And they have a diverse style that can be humorous (as when they imitated Vince and Shane McMahon) or deadly serious (as when they called out Rated RKO for their attack on Ric Flair). Simply put, they were mesmerizing. In an era when perhaps too much time is spent talking in wrestling, DeGeneration X consistently showed us how well it could be done in 2006. And they make it look so easy.

DeGeneration X	29%
John Cena	23%
Ken Kennedy	18%
Ric Flair	14%
Edge	6%
Sting	4%
Kurt Angle	2%
Others	4%



Captivating audiences with only two words

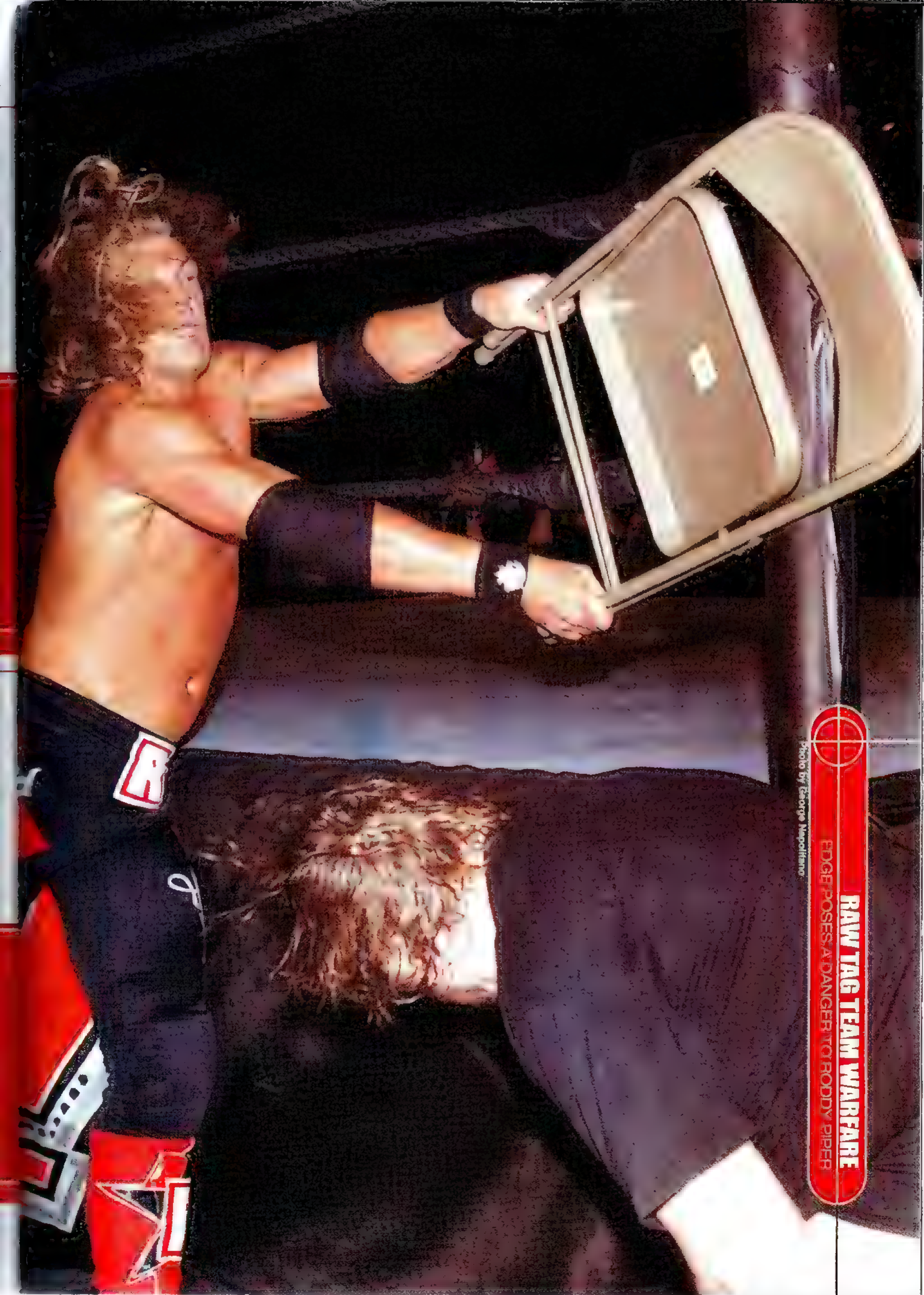


Photo by George Napolitano

RAW TAG TEAM WARFARE
EDGE/POSES/A DANGER TO RODDY PIPER

The 2007 PWI Poll

25. WHO IS THE MOST PROMISING DEVELOPMENTAL STAR?

Paul Birchall never got a fair shake when he was on Smackdown. Saddled with a humiliating pirate gimmick, Birchall rose above it to gain popularity before hearing the dreaded news that Creative didn't have anything for him. After being sent back to Ohio Valley Wrestling, Birchall honed his skills and became a dominant force in the developmental territory. Holding the OVW championship, Birchall has taken on all comers, and has done so with great skill and impressive victories. He's on his way back to the "big leagues" sooner rather than later, and, this time, he'll be hard to dismiss.



Former pirate sails above a ridiculous gimmick

Paul Birchall	23%
Chet the Jet	21%
Charles Evans	16%
Nattie Neidhart	15%
Oleg Prudius	8%
Steve Lewington	7%
Others	15%

26. WILL THE ECW BRAND HAVE LEGS AFTER 2007?

This was a resounding no! Though we admit that the question is rather vague in its wording (note, we did not ask if ECW would still be in existence after 2007, or if it will still be seen on the Sci Fi Channel by year's end). Still, there was an unmistakable feeling of negativity among our respondents. With the burying of ECW originals such as The F.B.I., Tommy Dreamer, The Sandman, Rob Van Dam, and Sabu, the brand has long since lost its soul. And judging from the tone of the responses, most subscribers feel ECW has lost its legs already and all that's left is to put it out of its misery. There was only one star in the making when the brand debuted—C.M. Punk—and even he has shown signs of losing momentum.

No	81%
Yes	15%
Unsure	4%

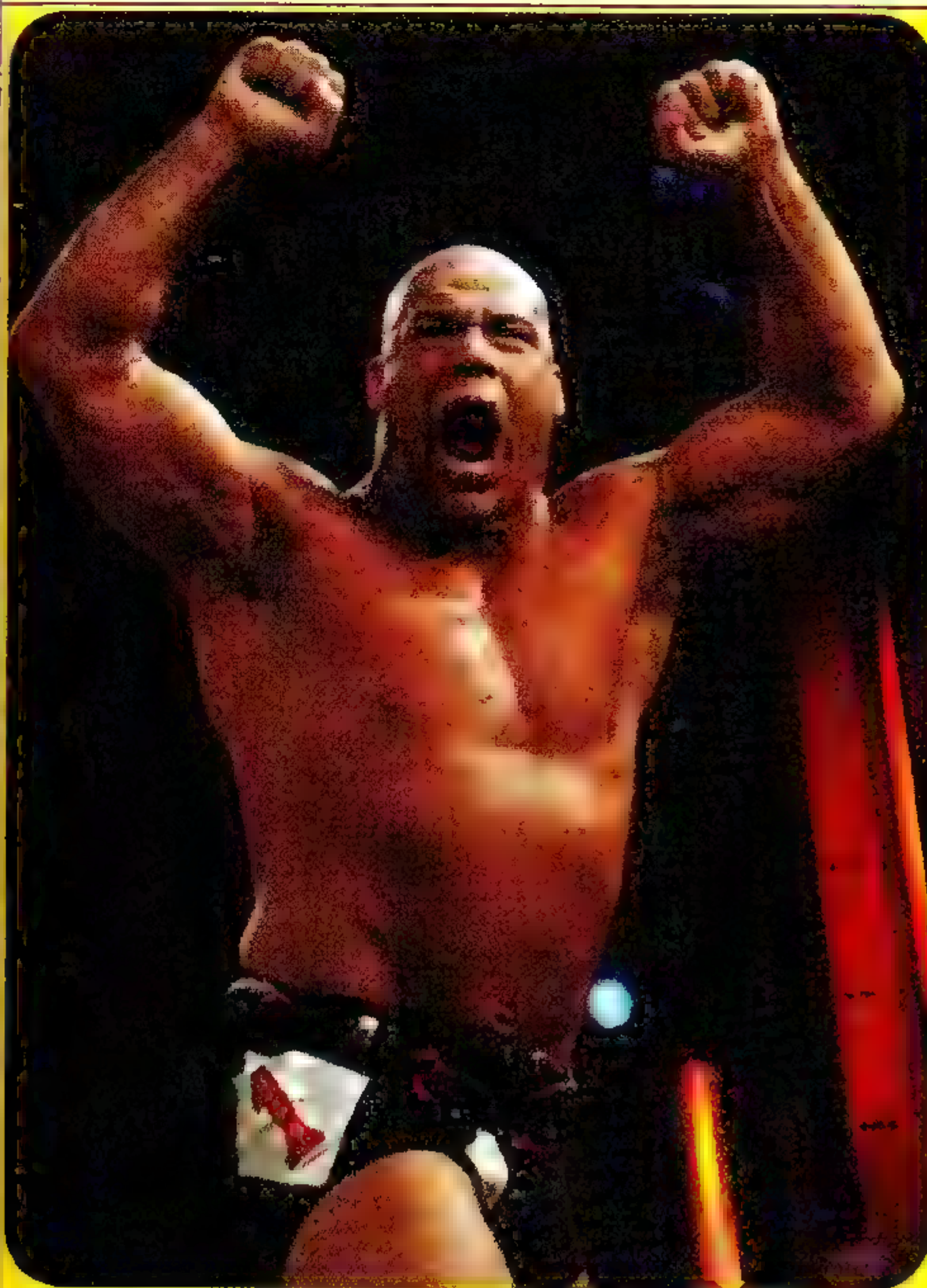
27. WHO WAS THE WWE MVP OF 2006?

They say that there's no bad publicity and that a positive or negative reaction is good. No reaction, however, signals death. Well, WWE must believe that about John Cena. He got mixed reactions from crowd after crowd, but remained WWE's most important star throughout 2006. He gained a lot of mainstream attention for the company by appearing in *The Marine*, Subway sandwich commercials, *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition*, and by facing off with Kevin Federline. But he also made it big in the ring, winning the main event at WrestleMania, and capturing the Raw World championship. John Cena has become the new face of WWE. His popularity is soaring among "The Chain Gang," and even his detractors are now finding positive things to say about him. WWE needed Cena this year, and he delivered for them. Interestingly, there were no votes for Montel Vontavious Porter in this category.

John Cena	26%
Edge	23%
Shawn Michaels	15%
King Booker	12%
Ken Kennedy	10%
Batista	7%
Triple-H	3%
The Undertaker	2%
Others	2%



Cena edges out the "Rated R Superstar"



Angle makes an Impact

28. WHO WAS THE TNA MVP FOR 2006?

There has never been a reaction in the Impact Zone like there was at the end of No Surrender when it was announced that Kurt Angle had signed with TNA. Even the deepest of insiders were shocked by the announcement, considering that he and WWE had reportedly mutually agreed to a release because of his physical condition. But his arrival was a boon to TNA, leading to an increase in ratings, pay-per-view buy rates, and general interest in the company. His feud with Samoa Joe provoked even more fan interest. And it's not as if he were the only impressive talent in TNA. Sting, Samoa Joe, Abyss, Christian Cage, Jeff Jarrett, A.J. Styles, Rhino, and many others on the TNA roster contributed a lot.

Kurt Angle	35%
Sting	30%
Samoa Joe	24%
Abyss	5%
Christian Cage	3%
Others	3%

29. WHO WILL BE TNA'S BIGGEST SIGNING OF 2007?

First it was Christian Cage, then Sting, and then finally Kurt Angle. Each man was touted as the biggest signing in TNA history, and, for the most part, that was an accurate description. But fans predict that Rob Van Dam will be added to the TNA roster in 2007. While RVD was initially the face of the new ECW, it quickly became clear that WWE would not allow him to maintain that top-tier role. Having been screwed out of title shot after title shot in ECW, RVD, has been relegated to mid-card status on the brand he resurrected. In TNA, he would be catapulted to a top spot, facing stars such as Christian Cage and A.J. Styles. Van Dam has legions of supporters who have been pulling for him in WWE and would join the TNA fan base if RVD were signed.

Rob Van Dam	62%
The Big Show	12%
Paul Heyman	10%
Bryan Danielson	9%
Chris Jericho	7%



Contemplating a move?

The 2007 PWI Poll

30. AT PRESS TIME, WWE STOCK WAS SELLING AT \$15.93 PER SHARE. WHERE DO YOU SEE WWE STOCK A YEAR FROM NOW?

Considering that industry insiders were polled in the August 2005 issue of *Inside Wrestling*, we were interested to find out whether *PWI* subscribers would view the wrestling world any differently. Judging by the responses, magazine subscribers tend to be more pessimistic about the state of wrestling, and no other question illustrated that more than this one. While a solid 25 percent believed that WWE's stock price would be about the same a year from now, a surprising 21 percent stated the value of the stock would be only half of what it is now. Only *half*? We try not to question the wisdom of our readers, but that seemed to be a very pessimistic view, even by the most stringent of Wall Street measures. Then again, 17 percent claimed that WWE stock would triple in value over the next year. Were they WWE investors?

About the same	25%
Half of what it is now	21%
Double	19%
Less than half	18%
Triple	17%

About the same	40%
One point higher	25%
One point lower	18%
Two or more points higher	17%

31. AT PRESS TIME, RAW WAS AVERAGING NIELSEN RATINGS OF 4.1. WHERE DO YOU SEE THOSE RATINGS A YEAR FROM NOW?

Raw has a loyal following, and it takes something huge to gain millions more viewers—and WWE Creative seems content with the status quo. Storylines rarely advance quickly, and the show has been lacking those big-time Raw moments that made it worth watching over the years. (Sorry, K-Fed pinning Cena doesn't qualify.) Yet there is still the loyal audience, and, as our readers pointed out, those fans will be there through the good and the bad. The Raw rating should stay the same in the next year because the approach to the product will likely stay the same. If nothing dramatically changes on Raw or in WWE, the ratings won't either.

32. AT PRESS TIME, SMACKDOWN WAS AVERAGING NIELSEN RATINGS OF 2.9. WHERE DO YOU SEE THOSE RATINGS A YEAR FROM NOW?

Friday night is not a great night for a television series to air, but Smackdown has shown that the time slot is not a death sentence. Smackdown's success is due to an engaging mix of storylines and wrestling. The other brands could learn from Smackdown's creative direction. With higher quality comes higher ratings, and our subscribers feel that Smackdown's quality and ratings will continue to improve. The growth will not be particularly substantial, perhaps because of the time slot, but it will be positive. While Raw holds steady and ECW sinks, Smackdown will be WWE's biggest gainer in the year ahead.

About the same	61%
One point higher	21%
One point lower	13%
Two or more points higher	5%

One point lower	60%
About the same	36%
One point higher	2%
Two or more points higher	2%

33. AT PRESS TIME, ECW WAS AVERAGING NIELSEN RATINGS OF 1.4. WHERE DO YOU SEE THOSE RATINGS A YEAR FROM NOW?

We didn't have an option of "Will be canceled," or that might have scored significantly here. In fact, the margin of victory for "one point down" was so substantial that it is obvious that *PWI* subscribers have little to no faith in the brand. Since debuting in June 2006, the brand has seen its ratings slide continually downward. But there is one important bright spot for ECW: Although the ratings are far below WWE expectations, they are still high numbers for the Sci Fi Channel. "I refuse to believe that WWE will allow ECW to wither on the vine," said one of the few respondents who was positive regarding ECW's future. "I think Vince and company will take a fresh look at ECW in 2007 and adjust accordingly. I don't see any sign that ECW's ratings will ever be in freefall."

MELINA VS. MARIA

NO WONDER HAW BROKE 4.0

Photo by Duane Long



The 2007 PWI Poll

34. AT PRESS TIME, *IMPACT* WAS AVERAGING NIELSEN RATINGS OF 1.1. WHERE DO YOU SEE THOSE RATINGS A YEAR FROM NOW?

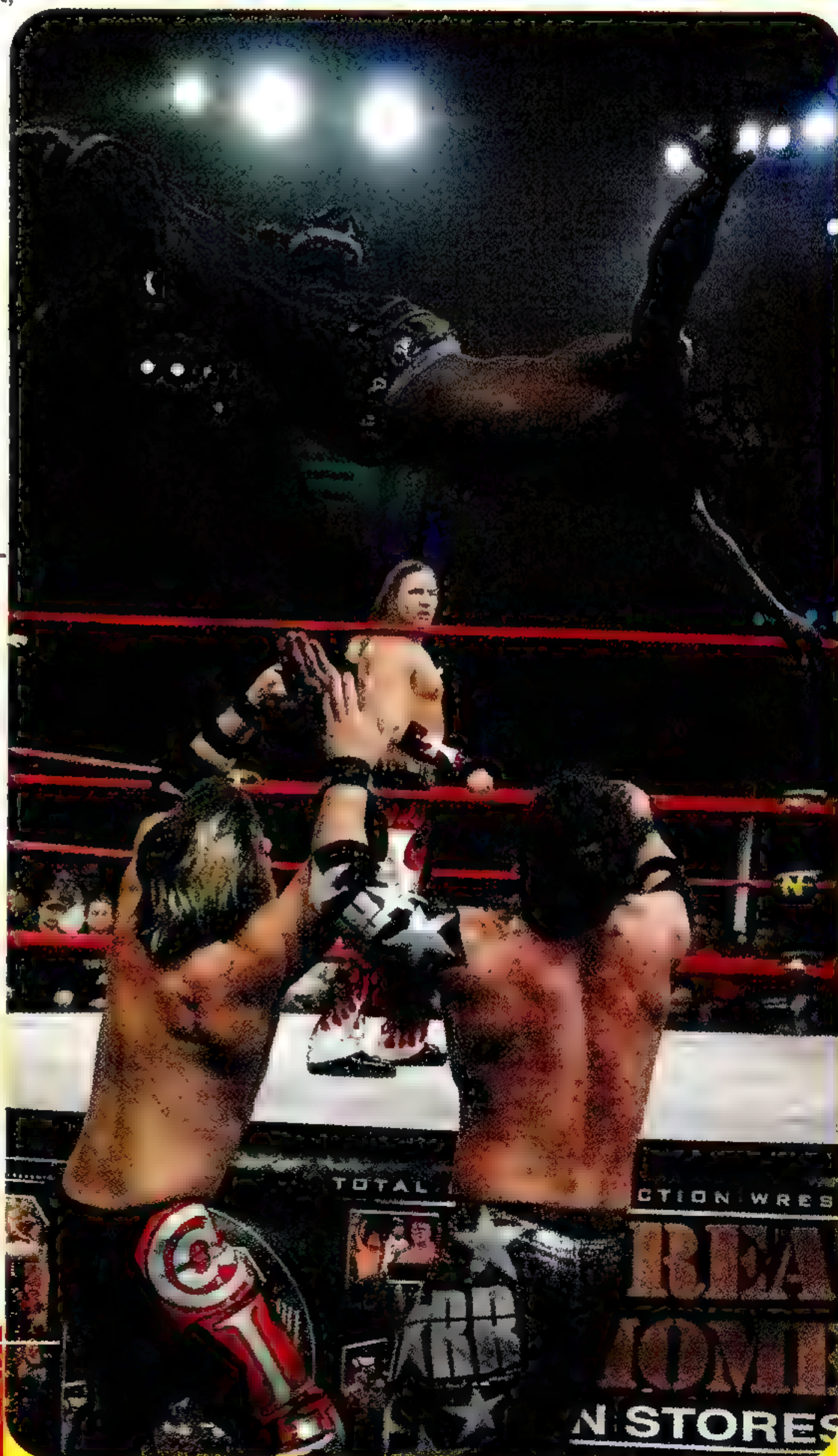
When Kurt Angle's jump to TNA and *Impact's* prime time premiere on Spike TV failed to boost the program's numbers higher than 1.0, company executives had good reason to fear for TNA's future. But, then, something happened: As more viewers sampled *Impact*, it began to retain more fans and routinely score 1.1, a rating that was a tenth of a point higher than the prime time premiere. Apparently, many of our subscribers predict that TNA's "slow build" will pay off, predicting that *Impact* will be a full point higher this time next year. With more than a million viewers tuning in each week, *Impact* should surpass ECW in the ratings and may even challenge Smackdown's numbers. But even our most pro-TNA respondents noted that it would be a long time before *Impact* mounts a serious challenge to Raw.

One point higher	38%
About the same	35%
Two or more points higher	16%
One point lower	11%

35. SHOULD TNA PLACE MORE EMPHASIS ON ITS YOUNG TALENT OR ESTABLISHED NAMES?

Like our question about Sting, this one was a hot-button issue. In this case, though, there is a bit more of an advantage to the younger stars. Wrestling fans have always loved seeing the new arrivals and following fresh careers from the start. Even if many of TNA's stars were first noticed in Ring of Honor, the fact that they haven't been in WWE has tended to make them more popular among diehard TNA fans. "The company's continued reliance on established names has stunted TNA's growth overall," said one respondent. "The big-name talent does help bring in fans, but the TNA originals maintain the audience over the long haul." Our subscribers want TNA to focus more on their existing talent, and less on the wrestlers from elsewhere.

Younger Talent	58%
Established Names	42%



Starved for attention

Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

YOUNG BLOOD OVERTAKES THE VETS IN TNA

SAMOA JOE VS. RAVEN



The 2007 PWI Poll

36. IF WWE COULD ADD ONE NAME TO ITS TALENT POOL, WHO SHOULD IT BE?

The wrestling world becomes abuzz with excitement whenever wrestlers jump from the independents or TNA to WWE. Oftentimes, they are popular with insider fans for having talents that would set them apart from other stars on Raw and Smackdown, but WWE Creative often gives them all-new identities that blunt their impact. Marcus Cor Von was a good example of this, and C.M. Punk was a notable exception to the rule. In this case, many of our readers chose a wrestler who better fits the WWE mold. Samoa Joe's repertoire is radically different from most WWE wrestlers, but he's also bigger than wrestlers such as Punk and A.J. Styles. He would add a lot to WWE, as a big man who can actually fight and appear credible while doing it. For that reason, our subscribers suggest, he would be a top prospect to head north.



A good fit for WWE?

Samoa Joe	43%
A.J. Styles	22%
Abyss	8%
Alex Shelley	7%
Chris Sabin	6%
Bryan Danielson	5%
Others	9%



Will it be two years in a row for Cena?

37. WHO DO YOU THINK WILL BE NUMBER ONE IN THE 2007 "PWI 500"?

Raw World champion John Cena could repeat his position at the top spot in next year's "PWI 500," according to many of our subscribers. If you ignore the K-Fed debacle, Cena has enjoyed a banner year, beating the top names in the sport. He's growing in popularity, expanding his moveset, and, now that Triple-H has been sidelined with another torn quadriceps, Cena really personifies the Raw brand. He's also broken through to the mainstream in a fashion that rivals predecessors such as Hulk Hogan and The Rock. "Love him or hate him, John Cena is the future of the business," noted one subscriber. "You can criticize his style, but you can't criticize his work ethic." TNA votes were evenly split between Samoa Joe and Kurt Angle, while Edge and Shawn Michaels earned high placements as the workhorses of WWE.

John Cena	33%
Samoa Joe	20%
Kurt Angle	20%
Edge	12%
Shawn Michaels	6%
Batista	4%
Others	5%



Marcus Cor Von has football fans and wrestling fans

38. ASSUMING WRESTLING IS YOUR FAVORITE SPORT, WHAT'S NEXT?

Football is such a popular sport, we're glad we worded the question as we did, or— heaven forbid—wrestling might not have won! (We're kidding, of course.) Football was the predicted winner here, so it's interesting to examine the also-rans. MMA's second-place finish will surely give the McMahons and Carters of the world the willies, as they view that quickly-rising sport as direct competition to their product. Hockey, whose popularity is on the decline in the U.S., benefited by being nearly the unanimous choice among Canadian respondents. Boxing suffered at the hands of MMA, while baseball is obviously not fast-moving enough for wrestling fans.

Football	38%	Auto racing	8%
MMA	20%	Basketball	5%
Hockey	12%	Baseball	5%
Boxing	10%	Other	2%

39. WHICH WAS THE BEST WWE PAY-PER-VIEW OF 2006?

Of the 16 pay-per-view events WWE held in 2006, only four featured wrestlers from all three brands. Those mixed events were generally considered the best. Most of our respondents selected WrestleMania as the best show of the year, and did so for a number of reasons. For some, it was the best because it had a historic feel that is often lacking in a world with so much wrestling on pay-per-view. Other subscribers felt that the event was great because of the high-quality matches (even the women's championship match was well-received!). The only "big four" WWE event not to receive a significant amount of votes was Survivor Series. That may be further evidence that the Royal Rumble battle royal—as a concept—is more exciting than traditional Survivor Series matches.

WrestleMania 22	55%
SummerSlam	20%
One Night Stand	18%
Royal Rumble	5%
Others	2%



WrestleMania 22 lives up to its name

Best of the Best

We have asked a number of wrestling insiders from around the world to answer this set of questions, all designed to analyze the sport's most awesome, dangerous, and effective holds and maneuvers. Which moves are the best? And which wrestlers are most proficient in executing them? Our poll numbers reveal the answers.

41. WHO IS THE BEST MEXICAN WRESTLER?

No single luchador has been so dominant in any given year as Mistico during the past 12 months. He was named "Luchador Del Ano" by every major lucha libre publication, placed fifth in the "PWI 500," and won the prestigious Lou Thesz/Ric Flair Performer of the Year Award in *The Wrestling Observer* 2006 year-end poll. Mistico is not just Mexico's biggest box office draw, but he is the most important man on the CMLL roster, which places him—at the very least—alongside men such as John Cena of WWE and Kenta Kobashi of NOAH. A distant second is perennial star Hijo del Santo, with scattered votes for many of Mexico's finest technicians and aerialists thereafter. Even the legendary Santo couldn't garner half the votes of Mistico this year.

Mistico	34%
El Hijo del Santo	13%
Ultimo Guerrero	11%
Negro Casas	8%
Dr. Wagner Jr.	6%
Others	28%



Number five in *PWI*; number one in Mexico

42. WHO IS THE BEST JAPANESE WRESTLER?

A tight race among puroresu's finest saw IWGP heavyweight champion Hiroshi Tanahashi inch out NOAH's Naomichi Marufuji by a margin of just a few votes. Marufuji's ascension to the Global Honored Crown title in NOAH showcased his great abilities, but his quick defeat at the hands of current champ Misawa seemed to paint him as a fluke. Marufuji's longtime rival, KENTA, also finished high, thanks in part to his American visibility following a series of appearances with Ring of Honor. There was also strong support for All Japan's Triple Crown champion Minoru Suzuki, who was dominant throughout the year. Tiger Mask IV, a New Japan staple, was characterized by one of our respondents as "puroresu's most underrated star. When is his performance anything less than perfect?"

Hiroshi Tanahashi	18%
Naomichi Marufuji	17%
KENTA	16%
Minoru Suzuki	13%
Mitsuharu Misawa	12%
Tiger Mask IV	8%
Others	16%



Tanahashi is tops in Japan

The 2007 PWI Poll

43. WHICH IS THE BEST TOP-ROPE MANEUVER?

This category was dominated more by time-honored moves than by new innovations, epitomized by Chris Benoit's flying headbutt. There are few moves that are so simple *and* so effective. Rob Van Dam's pet finisher landed the number-two spot, followed by the more-spectacular but lesser-seen spiral tap used by A.J. Styles. Styles' move is a variation on the Cancun tornado or skytwister press, a corkscrewing moonsault that sometimes ends like a press and other times like a senton. Van Dam's edge here can be attributed to his prominence on WWE television and his success ratio using the move (Styles typically finishes his matches with another move). The swanton, an invention of The Great Sasuke, is most associated with Jeff Hardy, who has made the move his trademark. Minor support turned out for Matt Sydal's picture-perfect shooting star press, and El Blazer's mind-blowing inverse 450 splash (he starts with his back to his opponent), as well as several other flying moves.

Chris Benoit's flying headbutt	19%
Rob Van Dam's five-star frog splash	18%
A.J. Styles' spiral tap	12%
Jeff Hardy's swanton bomb	12%
El Blazer's inverse 450 splash	9%
Matt Sydal's shooting star press	8%
Others	22%

44. WHAT IS THE BEST OFFENSIVE STRIKE?

Does absence really make the heart grow fonder? Although Rey Mysterio Jr. hasn't appeared on Smackdown in a few months, he still received enough votes to gain the top spot in this category. Interestingly, the 619 placed only fifth in our 2003 poll when the move was much more of a novelty. Chris Benoit's ferocious knife-edge chops were a close second. Just trailing Benoit in this category is his former New Japan rival, Jushin Liger, who popularized the open-palm blow in pro wrestling. Unlike Benoit's chops, Liger sometimes uses his signature strike to finish off his opponents, a fact pointed out on several ballots. Our experts also appreciated the wicked overhand chops of L.A. Park, the masked luchador who competed in WCW several years ago as La Parka. At times, he delivers his chops with such force that they sometimes send his skeletal gloves sailing into the crowd.



Benoit's butt is best



Mysterio knocks Orton into another area code

Rey Mysterio Jr.'s 619	16%
Chris Benoit's knife-edge chops	14%
Jushin Liger's palm strike	13%
L.A. Park's overhand chops	10%
KENTA's Baisaku knee	9%
Claudio Castagnoli's European uppercut	7%
Keiji Muto's shining wizard	5%
Others	26%



Senshi is still kicking

45. WHO HAS THE MOST EFFECTIVE KICKS?

Total votes in this category were split up fairly evenly between American and Japanese wrestlers, from top to bottom. This trend was evident in years past, when several wrestlers with martial arts backgrounds, such as Kawada and Van Dam, placed high. New to the list are KENTA, the NOAH star, as well as Samoa Joe, famed for his vicious kicks to the face. Kickboxer-turned-wrestler Yoshiaki Yago garnered just enough support to edge out Booker T, but in terms of style, the two couldn't be more different. TNA star Senshi, also known as Low-Ki, is feared for his educated feet, and several ballots pointed to his X division success as the result of his precision footwork. Few respondents named Shawn Michaels, who once scored high in this category for his superkick, now that the field is crowded with skilled wrestlers who use a wide variety of kicks in their matches.

KENTA	19%
Toshiaki Kawada	16%
Samoa Joe	15%
Rob Van Dam	13%
Yoshiaki Yago	9%
Booker T	8%
Senshi	6%
Others	14%

46. WHAT IS THE HIGHEST IMPACT MANEUVER?

How can someone evaluate the impact of a move, having never experienced it firsthand? Most of our insiders have not. One of the respondents shed some light on the topic: "When Kobashi lands his burning hammer, his opponents have to be helped out of the ring. It's simply devastating." The force with which wrestlers are driven to the mat by Edge's spear is patent, and the crippling effects of the Canadian destroyer are obvious to anyone who has seen Petey Williams' opponents post-match. As moves evolve through the years, more spectacular impact maneuvers (the Styles clash, the five-star frog splash) and more violent knockout moves (go to sleep, the gringo killa) are developing constantly, keeping this category in a constant state of flux.

Kenta Kobashi's burning hammer	17%
Edge's spear	15%
Petey Williams' Canadian destroyer	14%
KENTA's go to sleep	10%
Homicide's gringo killa	9%
Rob Van Dam's five-star frog splash	8%
A.J. Styles' Styles clash	7%
Others	20%



Edge's spear comes in second

The 2007 PWI Poll

47. WHICH IS THE MOST EFFECTIVE SUBMISSION HOLD?

In terms of effectiveness, it's tough to argue with our experts' choice in this category. Virtually every match wrestled by Mistico in the past year ended with La Mistica, a satellite headscissors that turns into a Fujiwara armbar at the end. "It has easily won more main-event bouts in the past 12 months than any other single hold," remarked one of our respondents. The kokina clutch, Samoa Joe's calling card, is at least partially responsible for his incredible winning percentage. There remains strong support for perennial favorites such as Benoit's Crippler crossface and Angle's anklelock. One of Cena's two primary finishers, the classic STF, cracked the list and would have no doubt ranked higher if it had been used as frequently as his FU slam. Danielson's cattle mutilation fell from favor with our experts, as he has shifted away from it as a match finisher, toward a small package hold.

Mistico's La Mistica	19%
Samoa Joe's kokina clutch	18%
Kurt Angle's anklelock	17%
Chris Benoit's Crippler crossface	11%
John Cena's STF	8%
Bryan Danielson's cattle mutilation	7%
Others	20%



Samoa Joe locks in the kokina clutch

Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

48. WHAT IS THE BEST PINNING COMBINATION?

They don't call Bryan Danielson "Mr. Small Package" for nothing. This simple cradle, a classic wrestling hold that has returned to prominence thanks to Danielson, has proved that sometimes the best solution is also the easiest. Several of Danielson's ROH title defenses saw him retain his championship courtesy of a basic inside cradle. Another vintage wrestling move, "La Casita," or, as it's sometimes called, "La Magistral," is the invention of Negro Casas' father, Pepe Casas. It's been winning matches for not just the Casas family, but everyone from Ultimo Dragon to El Dandy, for years. Dragon Gate wrestler Super Shisa makes use of a high-speed sunset flip known as the Yoshi tonic, but in terms of star power, Shisa is nowhere near Casas or Danielson, hurting the Yoshi tonic in this year's balloting. Misterio's springboard huracanrana (West Coast pop) and Milano's rolling mousetrap (natare bianco) both garnered enough votes to get on the board, while a sampling of other holds from around the globe each earned scattered votes.

Bryan Danielson's small package	20%
Negro Casas' La Casita	15%
Super Shisa's Yoshi tonic	11%
Rey Mysterio Jr.'s West Coast pop	10%
Milano Collection A.T.'s natare bianco	9%
Others	35%



Risky for Petey and his opponent

50. WHAT IS THE MOST EFFECTIVE OVERALL FINISHER?

"Nobody kicks out of the FU," wrote a number of our experts, and John Cena's impressive track record is proof of that. In terms of the balloting, only four votes separated Mistico's pet move from Cena's, an impressive feat for a finishing hold rarely seen on U.S. television. Although Batista was sidelined for much of the year, that didn't diminish the effectiveness of his Batista bomb, a seated power bomb that few wrestlers can overcome. The same cannot be true of Angle's trademark Angle slam, which has been replaced on nearly every ballot by his more effective anklelock. His success ratio with that hold, like Samoa Joe's kokina clutch, helped the hold place high on our list. Support still rolled in for perennial favorites such as the pedigree and the chokeslam, with diminishing interest in moves such as the shining wizard and the Ace crusher.

John Cena's FU	14%
Mistico's La Mistica	13%
Batista's Batista bomb	11%
Samoa Joe's kokina clutch	10%
Kurt Angle's anklelock	9%
Naomichi Marufuji's Shiranui	8%
Triple-H's pedigree	7%
Big Show's chokeslam	6%
Others	22%

49. WHICH IS THE RISKIEST MANEUVER?

The sport's bravest daredevils shined here, with over a dozen unique moves picking up votes in the category. The runaway winner was not a surprise, as Petey Williams' Canadian destroyer flip piledriver was the solid number one. More surprising was the fact that Ricochet's double moonsault press earned the second spot. This Midwest indy star is the only man of record performing the classic moonsault with a second revolution in it. Tijuana standout Extreme Tiger is also something of a risk-taker, laying opponents on the arena floor and then diving from the top turnbuckle into a 450 splash. One expert noted: "It's risky enough when landing it perfectly. Imagine when his opponent rolls out of the way!" A new addition to the ranks is Shanao's shooting star press variation. The masked Japanese man has a bevy of aerial originals in his repertoire, but none are as impressive as his shooting star press with a full 360 twist in the middle before landing.

Petey Williams' Canadian destroyer	24%
Ricochet's double moonsault press	18%
Extreme Tiger's 450 splash to the floor	15%
Ierelle Clark's 630 splash	9%
Dragon Kid's Dragonrana	8%
Shanao's corkscrew shooting star press	6%
Others	20%



Cena's FU voted most effective finish

The 1993 PWI Poll

1. WHO IS, POUND-FOR-POUND, THE BEST WRESTLER IN THE WORLD?

Jushin Liger	.32%
Bret Hart	.18%
Jeff Jarrett	.12%
Curt Hennig	.9%
Ric Flair	.8%
Others	.21%

2. IF YOU COULD WATCH THE MATCHES OF ONLY ONE WRESTLER, WHOM WOULD YOU CHOOSE?

Ric Flair	.27%
Jushin Liger	.9%
Hulk Hogan	.7%
Lou Thesz	.6%
Bruno Sammartino	.5%
Sting	.5%
Bret Hart	.4%
The Great Muta	.3%
Buddy Rogers	.3%
Others	.31%

3. IF YOU COULD WATCH THE MATCHES OF ONLY ONE TAG TEAM, WHICH WOULD YOU CHOOSE?

Rick & Scott Steiner	.21%
The Legion of Doom	.20%
The Heavenly Bodies	.11%
The Freebirds	.10%
The British Bulldogs	.4%
The Hart Foundation	.3%
The Rockers	.3%
Rock 'n' Roll Express	.3%
Ole & Gene Anderson	.3%
Others	.22%

4. WHICH NORTH AMERICAN FEDERATION HAS THE HIGHEST QUALITY WRESTLING?

WCW	.68%
WWF	.28%
Others	.4%

5. WHICH IS THE DOMINANT FEDERATION IN NORTH AMERICA?

WWF	.83%
WCW	.6%
None	.11%

6. WHO WOULD WIN A MATCH BETWEEN BIG VAN VADER AND HULK HOGAN?

Big Van Vader	.53%
Hulk Hogan	.47%

7. WHO WOULD WIN A MATCH BETWEEN STING AND BRET HART?

Hart	.51%
Sting	.49%

8. WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE OF WRESTLING AS HOPELESS, CLOUDY,

STATUS QUO, PROMISING, OR SHINING?

Cloudy	.25%
Status Quo	.32%
Promising	.35%
Shining	.5%
Hopeless	.3%

9. WHO IS WRESTLING'S BEST MANAGER?

Jim Cornette	.60%
Jimmy Hart	.25%
Bobby Heenan	.7%
Mr. Fuji	.3%
Others	.5%

10. IF YOU COULD WATCH A WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP MATCH AT ANY VENUE, WHERE WOULD IT BE?

Madison Square Garden	.69%
The Tokyo Dome	.9%
Baltimore Arena	.8%
The Omni	.5%
Kiel Auditorium	.4%
Others	.5%

11. WHO IS THE BEST TELEVISION COMMENTATOR?

Jim Ross	.33%
Jesse Ventura	.29%
Tony Schiavone	.27%
Bobby Heenan	.2%
Gorilla Monsoon	.2%
Others	.7%

12. SHOULD WRESTLING HAVE A MANDATORY RETIREMENT AGE?

Yes	.12%
No	.88%

13. SHOULD ALL TITLES CHANGE HANDS ON DISQUALIFICATIONS AND COUNTOUTS?

Yes	.76%
No	.24%

14. DO YOU THINK STEROID USE IS STILL PREVALENT IN WRESTLING?

Yes	.41%
No	.59%

15. WILL RIC FLAIR WIN HIS 10TH WORLD TITLE?

Yes	.38%
No	.62%

16. IS PAY-PER-VIEW GOOD FOR WRESTLING?

Yes	.77%
No	.23%

17. WOULD YOU DESCRIBE MAINSTREAM MEDIA COVERAGE OF WRESTLING AS POOR, MEDIOCRE, GOOD, OR EXCELLENT?

Poor	.92%
Mediocre	.6%
Good	.2%
Excellent	.0%

18. ARE THE BEST OF TODAY'S WRESTLERS AS GOOD AS THE BEST OF THOSE 40 YEARS AGO?

Yes	.66%
No	.34%

19. WOULD YOU GAUGE THE GENERAL PUBLIC'S PERCEPTION OF WRESTLING AS POOR, MEDIOCRE, GOOD, OR EXCELLENT?

Poor	.44%
Mediocre	.33%
Good	.22%
Excellent	.1%

20. WHO IS THE BEST REFEREE IN WRESTLING?

Dave Hebner	.53%
Nick Patrick	.35%
Dick Kroll	.8%
Others	.4%



Jushin Liger was a clear-cut winner in the best pound-for-pound category in 1993.

21. WHO IS THE MOST INFLUENTIAL MAN IN WRESTLING?

- Vince McMahon83%
- Hulk Hogan7%
- Ted Turner7%
- Others3%

***22. WHO HAS THE BEST BOSTON CRAB?**

- 1. Rick Martel
- 2. Stan Hansen
- 3. Jim Neidhart
- 4. Skinner
- 5. Sgt. Slaughter

23. WHO HAS THE BEST CLAW-HOLD?

- 1. Kevin Von Erich
- 2. Blackjack Mulligan
- 3. Barry Windham
- 4. Baron Von Raschke
- 5. El Gigante

24. WHO HAS THE BEST CLOTHES-LINE?

- 1. Rick Steiner
- 2. Stan Hansen
- 3. Bret Hart
- 4. Hawk
- 5. Beau Beverly

25. WHO HAS THE BEST DDT?

- 1. Jim Garvin
- 2. Jake Roberts
- 3. Michael Hayes
- 4. Dr. Tom Prichard
- 5. John Tatum

26. WHO HAS THE BEST DROPKICK?

- 1. Brian Pillman
- 2. Jeff Jarrett
- 3. Shawn Michaels
- 4. Chris Walker
- 5. Jim Brunzell

27. WHO HAS THE BEST ELBOWSMASH?

- 1. Randy Savage
- 2. Dustin Rhodes
- 3. Jerry Sags
- 4. Abdullah the Butcher
- 5. Austin Idol

28. WHO HAS THE BEST FIGURE-FOUR LEGLOCK?

- 1. Ric Flair
- 2. Sting
- 3. Greg Valentine
- 4. Eddie Gilbert
- 5. Ted DiBiase

29. WHO HAS THE BEST FLYING BODY-PRESS?

- 1. Rick Steamboat
- 2. Brian Pillman
- 3. The Patriot
- 4. Tom Zenk
- 5. Stevie Ray

30. WHO HAS THE BEST FLYING FISTDROP?

- 1. Jerry Lawler
- 2. Marty Jannetty
- 3. Shawn Michaels
- 4. The Honky Tonk Man
- 5. Randy Savage

31. WHO HAS THE BEST FULL-NEL-SON?

- 1. Billy Jack Haynes
- 2. The Warlord
- 3. Ken Patera
- 4. Sid Justice
- 5. Bill Kazmaier

32. WHO HAS THE BEST LEGDROP?

- 1. Bobby Eaton
- 2. Hulk Hogan
- 3. Sid Justice
- 4. The Patriot
- 5. Terry Gordy

33. WHO HAS THE BEST MOON-SAULT?

- 1. Jushin Liger
- 2. The Great Muta
- 3. Rob Zakowski

- 4. Lightning Kid
- 5. Ranger Ross

34. WHO HAS THE BEST PILE-DRIVER?

- 1. The Undertaker
- 2. Terry Funk
- 3. Jerry Lawler
- 4. Eric Embry
- 5. Don Muraco

35. WHO HAS THE BEST POWER-SLAM?

- 1. Steve Williams
- 2. Ron Simmons
- 3. Animal
- 4. Davey Boy Smith
- 5. Bam Bam Bigelow

36. WHO HAS THE BEST SAVATE KICK?

- 1. Stan Lane
- 2. John Tatum
- 3. Chris Adams
- 4. Bad New Brown
- 5. The Great Muta

37. WHO HAS THE BEST SCORPION DEATHLOCK?

- 1. Bret Hart
- 2. Sting
- 3. Riki Choshu
- 4. Terrence Taylor
- 5. Ron Garvin

38. WHO HAS THE BEST SLEEPERHOLD?

- 1. Ted DiBiase
- 2. Sgt. Slaughter
- 3. Tom Zenk
- 4. Virgil
- 5. Mark Youngblood

39. WHO HAS THE BEST SUNSET FLIP?

- 1. Tom Zenk
- 2. Mike Graham
- 3. Tito Santana
- 4. Terrence Taylor
- 5. Koko B. Ware

40. WHO HAS THE BEST VERTICAL SUPLEX?

- 1. Owen Hart
- 2. Davey Boy Smith
- 3. Lex Luger
- 4. Paul Orndorff
- 5. Dick Murdoch

41. WHO HAS THE BEST OVERALL FINISHER?

- 1. Scott Steiner (Frankensteiner)
- 2. Jushin Liger (moonsault)
- 3. Steve Williams (Oklahoma stampede)
- 4. Sting (Stinger splash)
- 5. Ric Flair (figure-four)

*(Numbers 22-41 were selected by the editors and printed in *PW!* July 1992)



The 1994 PWI Poll

1. WHO IS, POUND-FOR-POUND, THE BEST WRESTLER IN THE WORLD?

Jushin Liger	.27%
The Kid	.24%
Ric Flair	.15%
Bret Hart	.14%
Others	.20%

2. IF YOU COULD WATCH THE MATCHES OF ONLY ONE WRESTLER, WHOM WOULD YOU CHOOSE?

Ric Flair	.55%
Lou Thesz	.7%
Buddy Rogers	.6%
Andre the Giant	.5%
Sting	.4%
Rick Rude	.4%
Others	.19%

3. IF YOU COULD WATCH THE MATCHES OF ONLY ONE TAG TEAM, WHICH WOULD YOU CHOOSE?

The Legion of Doom	.29%
The Midnight Express	.18%
2 Cold Scorpio & Marcus Bagwell	.15%
The Heavenly Bodies	.11%
Rick & Scott Steiner	.7%
The Freebirds	.5%
The British Bulldogs	.4%
The Hart Foundation	.3%
Others	.8%

4. WHO WOULD WIN A MATCH BETWEEN YOKOZUNA AND BIG VAN VADER?

Big Van Vader	.91%
Yokozuna	.9%

5. WHO WOULD WIN A MATCH BETWEEN RICK AND SCOTT STEINER?

Scott Steiner	.57%
Rick Steiner	.43%

6. WHICH NORTH AMERICAN FEDERATION HAS THE HIGHEST-QUALITY WRESTLING?

WCW	.72%
WWF	.26%
Others	.2%

7. WHICH IS THE DOMINANT FEDERATION IN NORTH AMERICA?

WWF	.68%
WCW	.9%
None	.23%

8. WOULD YOU DESCRIBE WRESTLING'S IMMEDIATE FUTURE AS HOPELESS, CLOUDY, STATUS QUO, PROMISING, OR SHINING?

Cloudy	.42%
Promising	.29%
Status quo	.24%
Shining	.3%
Hopeless	.2%

9. WHO IS WRESTLING'S BEST MANAGER?

Jim Cornette	.74%
Harley Race	.21%
Others	.5%

10. SHOULD WRESTLING HAVE A MANDATORY RETIREMENT AGE?

Yes	.8%
No	.92%

11. DO YOU THINK STEROID USE IS STILL PREVALENT IN WRESTLING?

Yes	.35%
No	.65%

12. IF YOU COULD WATCH A WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP MATCH AT ANY VENUE, WHERE WOULD IT BE?

Madison Square Garden	.71%
The Tokyo Dome	.8%
Manhattan Center	.7%
Baltimore Arena	.5%
Korakuen Hall (Tokyo)	.3%
Others	.6%

13. WILL HULK HOGAN RETURN?

Yes	.91%
No	.9%

14. SHOULD ALL TITLES CHANGE HANDS ON DISQUALIFICATIONS AND COUNTOUTS?

Yes	.87%
No	.13%

15. WHO IS THE BEST TELEVISION COMMENTATOR IN WRESTLING?

Jesse Ventura	.48%
Jim Ross	.23%
Tony Schiavone	.12%
Bobby Heenan	.11%
Others	.6%

16. WILL WE SEE A WWF WORLD CHAMPION VS. WCW WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP MATCH WITHIN THE NEXT YEAR?

No	.94%
Yes	.6%

17. ARE THE BEST OF TODAY'S WRESTLERS AS GOOD AS THE BEST OF 40 YEARS AGO?

Yes	.68%
No	.32%

18. IS PAY-PER-VIEW GOOD FOR WRESTLING?

Yes	.71%
No	.29%

19. WOULD YOU DESCRIBE MAIN-STREAM MEDIA COVERAGE OF WRESTLING AS POOR, MEDIOCRE, GOOD, OR EXCELLENT?

Poor	.90%
Mediocre	.3%
Good	.2%
Excellent	.0%

20. WOULD YOU GAUGE THE GENERAL PUBLIC'S PERCEPTION OF WRESTLING AS POOR, MEDIOCRE, GOOD, OR EXCELLENT?

Poor	.53%
Mediocre	.27%
Good	.19%
Excellent	.1%

21. WHO IS THE BEST REFEREE IN WRESTLING?

Nick Patrick	.40%
Dave Hebner	.26%
Bill Alfonso	.19%
Randy Anderson	.11%
Others	.4%

22. GIVE A LETTER GRADE TO WWF PRESIDENT JACK TUNNEY FOR HIS JOB PERFORMANCE: A, B, C, D, OR F

C	.34%
B	.30%
D	.28%
F	.4%
A	.4%

23. WHO IS THE MOST INFLUENTIAL MAN IN WRESTLING?

Vince McMahon	.92%
Ted Turner	.5%
Others	.3%

24. DID WCW MAKE THE RIGHT MOVE BY NAMING NICK BOCKWINKEL COMMISSIONER?

Yes	.39%
No	.29%
Not sure	.32%

25. WILL VINCE McMAHON BE FOUND GUILTY OF ILLEGAL DISTRIBUTION OF STEROIDS?

No	.66%
Yes	.23%
Not sure	.11%

26. IF YOU ANSWERED YES, WILL McMAHON SPEND TIME IN JAIL?

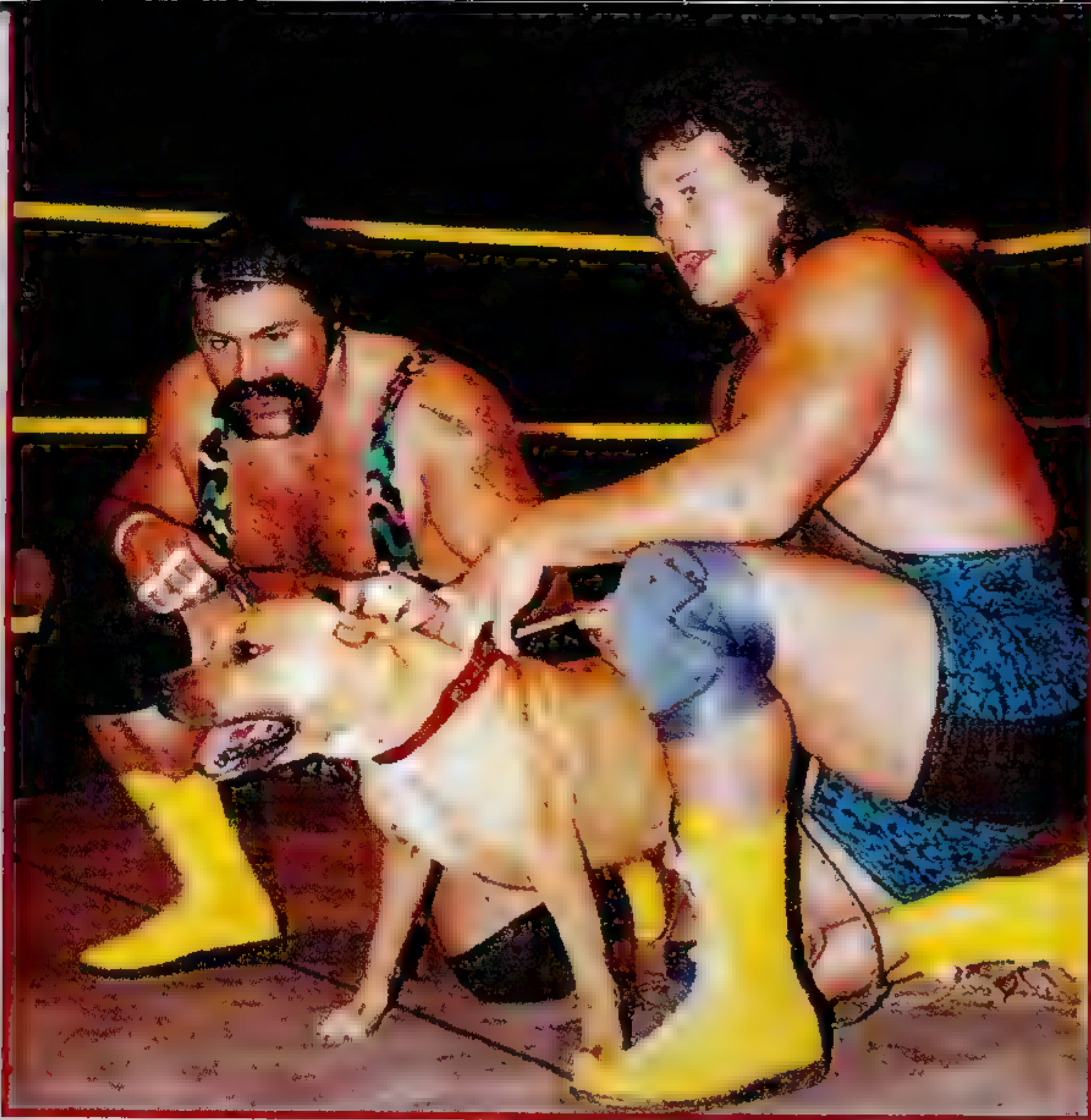
No	.76%
Yes	.20%
Not sure	.4%

27. WHICH IS THE BEST REGULARLY AIRED WEEKLY WRESTLING SHOW ON TV?

WWF Monday Night Raw	.84%
WCW Saturday Night	.8%
Others	.8%

28. WHICH IS ANNUALLY THE BEST WRESTLING PAY-PER-VIEW SHOW?

Royal Rumble	.23%
WrestleMania	.20%
Starrcade	.16%
Great American Bash	.14%
Survivor Series	.13%
Others	.14%



Picking the better Steiner was not easy back in 1994.

29. WHICH IS THE MOST IMPORTANT HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPIONSHIP IN NORTH AMERICA?

WCW World51%
WWF World49%

30. IS WRESTLING BETTER OR WORSE THAN IT WAS FIVE YEARS AGO?

Better64%
Worse36%

31. SHOULD CAGE MATCHES BE BANNED?

No96%
Yes4%

32. WILL THE REVIVED WWF WORLD WOMEN'S TITLE SUCCEED?

Yes51%
No38%
Don't know11%

33. WHO HAS THE BEST CLOTHES-LINE?

Razor Ramon28%
Rick Steiner26%
Big Van Vader21%
Stan Hansen11%
Others14%

34. WHO HAS THE BEST DROPKICK?

2 Cold Scorpio39%
Jushin Liger27%
The Kid11%
Brian Pillman9%
Bret Hart5%
Others9%

35. WHO HAS THE BEST DDT?

Shawn Michaels19%
Jake Roberts17%

Diesel15%
Arn Anderson14%
Tom Prichard13%
Others22%

36. WHO HAS THE BEST FIGURE-FOUR LEGLOCK?

Ric Flair88%
Sting4%
Rick Rude3%
Others5%

37. WHO HAS THE BEST ELBOW-SMASH?

Dustin Rhodes36%
Randy Savage33%
Big Van Vader10%
Jeff Jarrett6%
Jerry Lawler4%
Others11%

38. WHO HAS THE BEST FLYING BODYPRESS?

The Kid25%
Rick Steamboat23%
Brian Pillman19%
Jushin Liger9%
2 Cold Scorpio7%
Others17%

39. WHO HAS THE BEST FLYING FIST-DROP?

Jerry Lawler73%
2 Cold Scorpio11%
Randy Savage6%
Others10%

40. WHO HAS THE BEST PILEDRIVER?

Undertaker84%
Jerry Lawler13%
Others3%

41. WHO HAS THE BEST SAVATE KICK?

Sabu65%
Chris Adams12%
Tom Prichard7%
Jim Del Ray6%
Others10%

42. WHO HAS THE BEST LEGDROP?

Yokozuna32%
Bobby Eaton25%
The Patriot18%
Hulk Hogan12%
Sting6%
Others7%

43. WHO HAS THE BEST POWER-SLAM?

Big Van Vader41%
Steve Williams39%
Ron Simmons10%
Bam Bam Bigelow5%
Others5%

44. WHO HAS THE BEST MOON-SAULT?

Sabu54%
Jushin Liger20%
2 Cold Scorpio10%
Big Van Vader7%
Others9%

45. WHO HAS THE BEST SCORPION DEATHLOCK?

Bret Hart89%
Sting5%
Owen Hart3%
Others3%

46. WHO HAS THE BEST SLEEPER-HOLD?

Ted DiBiase95%
Others5%

47. WHO HAS THE BEST SUNSET FLIP?

2 Cold Scorpio31%
Johnny B. Badd20%
Sting16%
Bret Hart15%
Others18%

48. WHO HAS THE BEST VERTICAL SUPLEX?

Owen Hart55%
Lex Luger22%
Steve Austin8%
Big Van Vader6%
Rick Rude6%
Others3%

49. WHO HAS THE BEST POWER BOMB?

Big Van Vader90%
Razor Ramon6%
Others4%

50. WHO HAS THE BEST OVERALL FINISHER?

Big Van Vader
(power bomb)34%
Sabu (moonsault)20%
Bret Hart (sharpshooter)15%
Ric Flair (figure-four)10%
Others21%

The 1995 PWI Poll

1. WHO IS, POUND-FOR-POUND, THE BEST WRESTLER IN THE WORLD?

Shawn Michaels	.26%
Sabu	.19%
Big Van Vader	.13%
Bret Hart	.11%
Jushin Liger	.5%
Others	.26%

2. IF YOU COULD WATCH THE MATCHES OF ONLY ONE WRESTLER, WHOM WOULD YOU CHOOSE?

Ric Flair	.63%
Sabu	.8%
Lou Thesz	.6%
Buddy Rogers	.5%
Big Van Vader	.5%
Others	.13%

3. IF YOU COULD WATCH THE MATCHES OF ONLY ONE TAG TEAM, WHICH WOULD YOU CHOOSE?

The Legion of Doom	.36%
Rick & Scott Steiner	.20%
Midnight Express	.18%
British Bulldogs	.8%
Hart Foundation	.7%
Others	.11%

4. WHO WOULD WIN A MATCH BETWEEN HULK HOGAN AND DIESEL?

Hulk Hogan	.84%
Diesel	.16%

5. WHO WOULD WIN A MATCH BETWEEN HULK HOGAN AND HEAVY-WEIGHT BOXING CHAMPION GEORGE FOREMAN?

Hulk Hogan	.83%
George Foreman	.17%

6. WHICH NORTH AMERICAN FEDERATION HAS THE HIGHEST-QUALITY WRESTLING?

WCW	.58%
WWF	.36%
Others	.6%

7. HAS WCW SURPASSED THE WWF AS THE PREMIER FEDERATION IN THE WORLD?

No	.49%
Yes	.43%
Undecided	.8%

8. WILL BRET AND OWEN HART RE-UNITE IN 1995?

No	.75%
Yes	.25%

9. WOULD YOU DESCRIBE WRESTLING'S IMMEDIATE FUTURE AS HOPELESS, CLOUDY, STATUS QUO, PROMISING, OR SHINING?

Promising	.43%
-----------	------



Experts thought Bobby Heenan was better than Jerry Lawler as a commentator in 1995.

Status quo	.33%
Cloudy	.15%
Shining	.8%
Hopeless	.1%

10. IS WRESTLING BETTER OR WORSE THAN IT WAS ONE YEAR AGO?

Better	.76%
Worse	.24%

11. WHO IS WRESTLING'S SEXIEST SUPERSTAR?

Shawn Michaels	.38%
Woman	.15%
Diesel	.13%
Tamara Murphy Fytch	.11%
Others	.23%

12. DO YOU THINK STEROID USE IS STILL PREVALENT IN WRESTLING?

No	.82%
Yes	.18%

13. WHO IS WRESTLING'S BEST MANAGER?

Jim Cornette	.54%
Jimmy Hart	.15%
Col. Rob Parker	.11%
Harley Race	.7%
Ted DiBiase	.6%
Others	.7%

14. IF YOU COULD WATCH A WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP MATCH AT ANY VENUE, WHERE WOULD IT BE?

Madison Square Garden	.62%
ECW Arena	.19%
Tokyo Dome	.6%
Baltimore Arena	.5%
Others	.8%

15. WILL HULK HOGAN RE-RETIRE?

Yes	.69%
No	.31%

16. WILL RIC FLAIR COME OUT OF RETIREMENT?

No	.57%
Yes	.43%

17. WHO IS THE BEST TELEVISION COMMENTATOR IN WRESTLING?

Bobby Heenan	.21%
Jerry Lawler	.17%
Tony Schiavone	.15%
Gene Okerlund	.12%
Joey Styles	.8%
Jim Ross	.6%
Vince McMahon	.5%
Others	.16%

18. WILL WE SEE A WWF WORLD CHAMPION VS. WCW WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP MATCH WITHIN THE NEXT YEAR?

No	.99%
Yes	.1%

19. ARE THE BEST OF TODAY'S WRESTLERS AS GOOD AS THE BEST OF 40 YEARS AGO?

Yes	.65%
No	.35%

20. WOULD YOU DESCRIBE MAINSTREAM MEDIA COVERAGE OF WRESTLING AS POOR, MEDIOCRE, GOOD, OR EXCELLENT?

Poor	.98%
Mediocre	.2%

21. WOULD YOU GAUGE THE GENERAL PUBLIC'S PERCEPTION OF WRESTLING AS POOR, MEDIOCRE, GOOD, OR EXCELLENT?

Poor	.39%
Mediocre	.37%
Good	.22%
Excellent	.2%

22. GIVE A LETTER GRADE TO WWF PRESIDENT JACK TUNNEY FOR HIS JOB PERFORMANCE: A, B, C, D, OR F

C	.30%
D	.28%
B	.22%
A	.10%
F	.10%

23. GIVE A LETTER GRADE TO WCW COMMISSIONER NICK BOCKWINKEL FOR HIS JOB PERFORMANCE: A, B, C, D, OR F

D	33%
C	30%
B	25%
F	7%
A	5%

24. WHO IS THE MOST INFLUENTIAL MAN IN WRESTLING?

Hulk Hogan	62%
Vince McMahon	33%
Ted Turner	3%
Others	2%

25. WHICH IS THE BEST WEEKLY WRESTLING SHOW ON TV?

WWF Monday Night Raw	80%
WCW Saturday Night	8%
WWF Action Zone	4%
Others	8%

26. WHICH IS THE MOST IMPORTANT HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPIONSHIP IN NORTH AMERICA?

WCW World	59%
WWF World	41%

27. HAVE BULL NAKANO AND ALONDRA BLAYZE SUCCEEDED IN REJUVENATING WOMEN'S WRESTLING IN NORTH AMERICA?

No	74%
Yes	23%
Too soon to tell	3%

28. WHO IS WRESTLING'S BEST BRAWLER?

Big Van Vader	53%
Cactus Jack	21%
Sabu	11%
Terry Funk	6%
King Kong Bundy	4%
Kevin Sullivan	3%
Others	2%

29. WHO IS WRESTLING'S FASTEST MAN?

Sabu	54%
The Kid	43%
Others	3%

30. DOES THE ULTIMATE FIGHTING CHAMPIONSHIP POSE A THREAT TO PRO WRESTLING?

No	83%
Yes	17%

31. WHICH IS THE BEST INDEPENDENT FEDERATION IN NORTH AMERICA?

ECW	48%
Smoky Mountain	22%
USWA	17%
Others	13%

32. WHO GIVES THE BEST INTER-VIEWS?

Big Van Vader	20%
Shawn Michaels	18%
Jerry Lawler	15%

Owen Hart	14%
Bob Backlund	13%
Others	20%

33. WHICH IS THE BEST SPECIALTY MATCH?

Steel cage	17%
Barbed wire	15%
Chain	14%
"I Quit"	12%
Texas death	8%
Others	34%

34. WHO IS THE BEST FOREIGN WRESTLER?

The Great Muta	22%
Toshiaki Kawada	20%
Shinya Hashimoto	18%
Konnan	10%
Bull Nakano	5%
Others	25%

35. WHO IS THE BEST FOREIGN WRESTLER CURRENTLY COMPETING IN NORTH AMERICA?

Sabu	41%
Davey Boy Smith	26%
Lord Steven Regal	12%
Yokozuna	7%
Others	14%

36. WHICH WAS THE BEST PAY-PER-VIEW EVENT OF THE YEAR?

WrestleMania X	25%
Halloween Havoc	23%
Royal Rumble	21%
Bash at the Beach	12%
Starrcade	9%
Others	10%

37. WHO IS WRESTLING'S BEST NEW PROSPECT?

Alex Wright	23%
Bryant Anderson	18%
Jean-Paul LeVeque	17%
Osamu Nishimura	9%
Others	33%

38. WHO HAS THE BEST CLOTHES-LINE?

Rick Steiner	27%
Hulk Hogan	26%
Irwin R. Schyster	22%
Lex Luger	18%
Others	7%

39. WHO HAS THE BEST DROPKICK?

The Kid	33%
2 Cold Scorpio	31%
Jeff Jarrett	15%
Owen Hart	12%

40. WHO HAS THE BEST ELBOW-SMASH?

Randy Savage	30%
Diesel	28%
Dustin Rhodes	20%
Brian Knobs	10%
Others	12%

41. WHO HAS THE BEST LEGDROP?

Hulk Hogan	68%
Yokozuna	11%

Sabu	9%
The Patriot	6%
Others	6%

42. WHO HAS THE BEST FLYING BODYPRESS?

2 Cold Scorpio	22%
Owen Hart	20%
The Kid	18%
Brian Pillman	15%
Others	25%

43. WHO HAS THE BEST PILEDRIVER?

Undertaker	79%
Jerry Lawler	12%
Shawn Michaels	9%

44. WHO HAS THE BEST SAVATE KICK?

Shawn Michaels	41%
Sabu	35%
Kwang	10%
Others	14%

45. WHO HAS THE BEST POWER-SLAM?

Davey Boy Smith	32%
Steve Williams	31%
Razor Ramon	18%
Ron Simmons	9%
Lex Luger	8%
Others	2%

46. WHO HAS THE BEST MOON-SAULT?

Sabu	57%
Big Van Vader	14%
Al Snow	12%
The Kid	11%
2 Cold Scorpio	5%
Others	1%

47. WHO HAS THE BEST SCORPION DEATHLOCK?

Bret Hart	68%
Owen Hart	20%
Sting	6%
Others	6%

48. WHO HAS THE BEST VERTICAL SUPLEX?

Davey Boy Smith	36%
Lex Luger	25%
Steve Austin	20%
Owen Hart	8%
Tasmaniac	7%
Others	4%

49. WHO HAS THE BEST POWER BOMB?

Big Van Vader	52%
Diesel	46%
Others	2%

50. WHO HAS THE BEST OVERALL FINISHER?

Big Van Vader (power bomb)	28%
Diesel (power bomb)	24%
911 (choke-slam)	18%
Bob Backlund(chicken wing)	13%
Hulk Hogan (legdrop)	12%
Others	5%

The 1996 PWI Poll

1. WHO IS, POUND-FOR-POUND, THE BEST WRESTLER IN THE WORLD?

Rey Mysterio Jr.	19%
Shawn Michaels	15%
Bret Hart	14%
Sabu	12%
Mitsuharu Misawa	7%
The Great Muta	5%
Others	28%

2. IF YOU COULD WATCH THE MATCHES OF ONLY ONE WRESTLER, WHOM WOULD YOU CHOOSE?

Sabu	25%
Shawn Michaels	22%
Ric Flair	8%
Big Van Vader	7%
Antonio Inoki	6%
Others	32%

3. IF YOU COULD WATCH THE MATCHES OF ONLY ONE TAG TEAM, WHICH WOULD YOU CHOOSE?

The Road Warriors	30%
Rick & Scott Steiner	16%
The Midnight Express	11%
The Nasty Boys	10%
The British Bulldogs	7%
The Hart Foundation	7%
Public Enemy	5%
Others	14%

4. WHO WOULD WIN A MATCH BETWEEN BRET HART AND RANDY SAVAGE?

Bret Hart	86%
Randy Savage	14%

5. WHICH NORTH AMERICAN FEDERATION HAS THE HIGHEST QUALITY WRESTLING?

WCW	48%
WWF	39%
ECW	11%
Others	2%

6. HAS WCW SURPASSED THE WWF AS THE PREMIER FEDERATION IN NORTH AMERICA?

Yes	58%
No	40%
Undecided	2%

7. WITHIN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS, WILL THE WWF AND WCW ELIMINATE ALL NON-TELEVISED ARENA CARDS FROM THEIR SCHEDULES?

No	82%
Yes	13%
Not sure	5%

8. WOULD YOU DESCRIBE WRESTLING'S IMMEDIATE FUTURE AS HOPELESS, CLOUDY, STATUS QUO, PROMISING, OR SHINING?

Status quo	38%
Promising	34%

Cloudy	20%
Shining	7%
Hopeless	1%

9. WHO IS WRESTLING'S BEST MANAGER?

Jimmy Hart	43%
Jim Cornette	40%
Sherri Martel	6%
Kevin Sullivan	5%
Ted DiBiase	4%
Others	2%

10. WHO REALLY RULES MONDAY NIGHTS?

WCW	48%
WWF	43%
Even	5%
Neither	4%

11. HOGAN OR FLAIR: WHO WILL LAUGH LAST?

Hulk Hogan	69%
Ric Flair	31%

12. SHOULD SHAWN MICHAELS RETIRE?

No	71%
Yes	14%
Undecided	15%

13. WHO IS WRESTLING'S SEXIEST WOMAN?

Tammy "Sunny" Sytch	47%
Beulah McGillicutty	19%
Woman	15%
The Diamond Doll	14%
Others	5%

14. WHO IS THE BEST TELEVISION COMMENTATOR IN WRESTLING?

Jerry Lawler	25%
Joey Styles	23%
Bobby Heenan	12%
Jim Ross	8%
Tony Schiavone	7%
Gene Okerlund	6%



How could anyone argue with the choice of Tammy "Sunny" Sytch as wrestling's sexiest woman in 1996?

Vince McMahon	5%
Others	14%

15. WILL WE SEE A WWF WORLD CHAMPION VS. WCW WORLD CHAMPION MATCH WITHIN THE NEXT YEAR?

No	100%
Yes	0%

16. IS THERE JUST ENOUGH, TOO MUCH, OR NOT ENOUGH PAY-PER-VIEW WRESTLING?

Just enough	53%
Too much	44%
Not enough	3%

17. SHOULD THE ULTIMATE FIGHTING CHAMPIONSHIP BE OUTLAWED?

No	94%
Yes	6%

18. WOULD YOU DESCRIBE MAIN-STREAM MEDIA COVERAGE OF WRESTLING AS POOR, MEDIOCRE, GOOD, OR EXCELLENT?

Poor	90%
Mediocre	10%

19. WOULD YOU GAUGE THE GENERAL PUBLIC'S PERCEPTION OF WRESTLING AS POOR, MEDIOCRE, GOOD, OR EXCELLENT?

Mediocre	38%
Poor	37%
Good	18%
Excellent	7%

20. GIVE A LETTER GRADE TO INTERIM WWF PRESIDENT GORILLA MONSOON FOR HIS JOB PERFORMANCE: A, B, C, D, OR F

D	32%
A	30%
F	18%
B	17%
C	3%

21. GIVE A LETTER TO WCW COMMISSIONER NICK BOCKWINKEL FOR HIS JOB PERFORMANCE: A, B, C, D, OR F

D	48%
F	25%
C	19%
B	5%
A	3%

22. WHO IS THE MOST INFLUENTIAL MAN IN WRESTLING?

Hulk Hogan	44%
Vince McMahon	24%
Ted Turner	20%
Eric Bischoff	12%

23. WHICH IS THE BEST WRESTLING SHOW ON TV, PAY-PER-VIEW, CABLE, OR OTHERWISE?

WWF's Royal Rumble	19%
--------------------	-----

WCW's Starrcade	16%
WWF's WrestleMania	14%
WWF Monday Night Raw	12%
WCW Monday Nitro	12%
WWF King of the Ring	9%
Others	18%

24. WHICH IS THE MOST IMPORTANT HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPIONSHIP IN NORTH AMERICA?

WWF World	52%
WCW World	48%

25. IS WRESTLING BETTER OR WORSE THAN IT WAS FIVE YEARS AGO?

Better	61%
Worse	39%

26. SHOULD PWI RECOGNIZE A THIRD WORLD TITLE?

No	91%
Yes	9%

27. WHO IS THE MOST UNDERRATED WRESTLER IN THE WORLD?

Shane Douglas	12%
Eddie Guerrero	11%
Dan Severn	9%
The Kid	8%
Dean Malenko	7%
Steve Austin	6%
Others	47%

28. WHO IS THE MOST OVERRATED WRESTLER IN THE WORLD?

Lex Luger	40%
Sid Vicious	30%
Owen Hart	9%
The Undertaker	8%
Hulk Hogan	6%
Others	7%

29. WHO IS WRESTLING'S WILDEST DAREDEVIL?

Rey Mysterio Jr.	42%
Sabu	35%
Jushin Liger	5%
Others	18%

30. WHO IS WRESTLING'S BEST BRAWLER?

Big Van Vader	53%
The Undertaker	17%
The Giant	10%
Cactus Jack	8%
One Man Gang	5%
Others	7%

31. WHICH IS WRESTLING'S BEST BRAWLING TAG TEAM?

Public Enemy	42%
The Nasty Boys	41%
The Gangstas	11%
PG-13	4%
Others	2%

32. WHICH IS THE BEST INDEPENDENT FEDERATION IN NORTH AMERICA?

ECW	62%
USWA	15%
AAA	14%
Others	9%

33. WHO GIVES THE BEST INTER-VIEWS?

Cactus Jack	19%
Big Van Vader	17%
Paul Bearer	13%
Jeff Jarrett	12%
Jim Cornette	11%
Public Enemy	9%
Bob Backlund	6%
Others	13%

34. WHO GIVES THE WORST INTER-VIEWS?

Randy Savage	24%
Hulk Hogan	22%
Ric Flair	14%
Razor Ramon	12%
The Kid	10%
Others	18%

35. WHICH IS THE BEST SPECIALTY MATCH?

Falls-count-anywhere	35%
Steel cage	15%
Ladder	14%
Chain	13%
Others	23%

36. WHO IS THE BEST FOREIGN WRESTLER?

Mitsuharu Misawa	24%
The Great Muta	22%
Rey Mysterio Jr.	18%
Antonio Inoki	9%
Nobuhiko Takada	8%
Jushin Liger	7%
Others	12%

37. WHO IS THE BEST FOREIGN WRESTLER CURRENTLY WRESTLING PRIMARILY IN NORTH AMERICA?

Sabu	35%
Davey Boy Smith	24%
Yokozuna	14%
Lord Steven Regal	11%
Others	16%

38. WILL 1996 BE HULK HOGAN'S FINAL YEAR IN WRESTLING?

No	59%
Yes	39%
Unsure	2%

39. WHO HAS THE BEST CLOTHES-LINE?

Hulk Hogan	40%
Lex Luger	15%
The Undertaker	14%
The Giant	10%
Others	21%

40. WHO HAS THE BEST DROPKICK?

Alex Wright	22%
Rey Mysterio Jr.	19%
The Kid	18%
Eddie Guerrero	17%
2 Cold Scorpio	16%
Others	8%

41. WHO HAS THE BEST MOONSAULT?

2 Cold Scorpio	33%
Rey Mysterio Jr.	32%
Sabu	19%

The Great Muta	10%
Big Van Vader	6%

42. WHO HAS THE BEST FLYING BODYPRESS?

Sabu	40%
Shawn Michaels	30%
The Kid	10%
Rey Mysterio Jr.	8%
Brian Pillman	7%
Others	6%

43. WHO HAS THE BEST PILEDRIVER?

The Undertaker	80%
Jerry Lawler	8%
Jeff Jarrett	5%
Paul Orndorff	5%
Others	2%

44. WHO HAS THE BEST LEGDROP?

Hulk Hogan	75%
Diesel	10%
Yokozuna	9%
Ahmed Johnson	4%
Others	2%

45. WHO HAS THE BEST POWERSLAM?

Ahmed Johnson	29%
Davey Boy Smith	28%
Lex Luger	20%
Big Van Vader	15%
Others	8%

46. WHO HAS THE BEST SCORPION DEATHLOCK/SHARPSHOOTER?

Bret Hart	45%
Sting	44%
Owen Hart	6%
Others	5%

47. WHO HAS THE BEST VERTICAL SUPLEX?

Davey Boy Smith	35%
Ric Flair	21%
Hulk Hogan	15%
Lex Luger	13%
Brian Christopher	9%
Others	7%

48. WHO HAS THE BEST POWER BOMB?

Big Van Vader	46%
Diesel	46%
Sid Vicious	8%

49. WHO HAS THE BEST OVERALL FINISHER?

Bret Hart (sharpshooter) ..	25%
The Undertaker (tombstone piledriver) ..	22%
Ahmed Johnson (Pearl River plunge) ..	15%
Razor Ramon (Razor's edge)	14%
Hulk Hogan (legdrop)	13%
Others	11%

50. WHAT IS WRESTLING'S BEST MANEUVER?

The moonsault	47%
The flying bodypress	22%
The double-dropkick	12%
The vertical suplex	11%
Others	8%

The 1997 PWI Poll

1. WHO IS, POUND-FOR-POUND, THE BEST WRESTLER IN THE WORLD?

Rey Mysterio Jr.	17%
Shawn Michaels	16%
Eddie Guerrero	13%
Mitsuharu Misawa	12%
Bret Hart	12%
Jushin Liger	8%
Dean Malenko	6%
Others	16%

2. IF YOU COULD WATCH THE MATCHES OF ONLY ONE WRESTLER, WHOM WOULD YOU CHOOSE?

Shawn Michaels	22%
Sabu	20%
Rey Mysterio Jr.	16%
Steve Austin	15%
Chris Benoit	11%
Others	16%

3. IF YOU COULD WATCH THE MATCHES OF ONLY ONE TAG TEAM, WHICH WOULD YOU CHOOSE?

Rick & Scott Steiner	28%
The Road Warriors	17%
The Midnight Express	14%
Harlem Heat	9%
The British Bulldogs	6%
The Hart Foundation	5%
The Eliminators	5%
Others	16%

4. WHO WOULD WIN A MATCH BETWEEN HULK HOGAN AND SHAWN MICHAELS?

Shawn Michaels	65%
Hulk Hogan	35%

5. WHICH NORTH AMERICAN FEDERATION HAS THE HIGHEST QUALITY WRESTLING?

WCW	47%
WWF	37%
ECW	16%

6. WHICH IS THE PREMIER FEDERATION IN NORTH AMERICA?

WCW	60%
WWF	37%
ECW	3%

7. WOULD YOU DESCRIBE WRESTLING'S IMMEDIATE FUTURE AS HOPELESS, CLOUDY, STATUS QUO, PROMISING, OR SHINING?

Promising	42%
Status quo	25%
Cloudy	17%
Shining	16%
Hopeless	0%

8. WHO REALLY RULES MONDAY NIGHTS?

WCW	63%
WWF	33%
Even/not sure	4%

9. WHO IS WRESTLING'S BEST MANAGER?

Jimmy Hart	35%
Ted DiBiase	30%
Clarence Mason	13%
Sherri Martel	8%
Jim Cornette	8%
Others	6%

10. WHO IS WRESTLING'S SEXIEST WOMAN?

Kimberly	36%
Sunny	32%
Marlena	9%
Debra McMichael	7%
Beulah McGillicutty	6%
Francine	5%
Others	5%

11. WHO IS THE BEST TELEVISION COMMENTATOR IN WRESTLING?

Jim Ross	23%
Mike Tenay	19%
Jerry Lawler	18%
Joey Styles	16%
Tony Schiavone	10%
Bobby Heenan	9%
Others	5%

12. WOULD YOU DESCRIBE MAIN-STREAM MEDIA COVERAGE OF WRESTLING AS POOR, MEDIOCRE, GOOD, OR EXCELLENT?

Poor	92%
Mediocre	8%

13. WOULD YOU GAUGE THE GENERAL PUBLIC'S PERCEPTION OF WRESTLING AS POOR, MEDIOCRE, GOOD, OR EXCELLENT?

Mediocre	34%
Poor	33%
Good	28%
Excellent	5%

14. WHO IS THE MOST INFLUENTIAL MAN IN WRESTLING?

Eric Bischoff	34%
Hulk Hogan	31%
Vince McMahon	26%
Ted Turner	9%

15. WHICH IS THE BEST WRESTLING SHOW ON TV, PAY-PER-VIEW, CABLE, OR OTHERWISE?

WCW Monday Nitro	40%
WWF Monday Night Raw	19%
WWF's Royal Rumble	15%
WWF's WrestleMania	10%
WCW's Starrcade	6%
ECW's weekly show	6%
Others	4%

16. WHICH IS THE MOST IMPORTANT CHAMPIONSHIP IN NORTH AMERICA?

WWF World	54%
WCW World	46%



Think Ultimo Dragon considered Dean Malenko to be underrated in '97?

17. IS WRESTLING BETTER OR WORSE THAN IT WAS FIVE YEARS AGO?

Better	81%
Worse	19%

18. WHO IS THE MOST UNDERRATED WRESTLER IN THE WORLD?

Dean Malenko	17%
Chris Benoit	15%
"Diamond" Dallas Page	14%
Eddie Guerrero	7%
Hunter Hearst Helmsley	6%
Chris Candido	5%
Others	36%

19. WHO IS THE MOST OVERRATED WRESTLER IN THE WORLD?

Hulk Hogan	38%
Big Van Vader	25%
Sid Vicious	14%
Lex Luger	8%
Others	15%

20. WHO IS WRESTLING'S WILDEST DAREDEVIL?

Rey Mysterio Jr.	53%
Sabu	22%
Jushin Liger	15%
Shawn Michaels	5%
Others	5%

21. WHO IS WRESTLING'S BEST BRAWLER?

Sid Vicious	36%
The Giant	28%
The Undertaker	16%
Mankind	9%
The Sandman	6%

22. WHICH IS WRESTLING'S BEST BRAWLING TAG TEAM?

Scott Hall & Kevin Nash .37%
Harlem Heat .19%
The Nasty Boys .18%
The Gangstas .13%
The Eliminators .5%
Others .8%

23. WHICH IS THE BEST INDEPENDENT FEDERATION IN NORTH AMERICA?

ECW .89%
USWA .7%
Others .4%

24. WHO GIVES THE BEST INTERVIEWS?

Steve Austin .17%
Mankind .16%
Arn Anderson .15%
Ric Flair .14%
Shawn Michaels .13%
Others .25%

25. WHICH IS THE BEST SPECIALTY MATCH?

Falls-count-anywhere .32%
Steel cage .17%
Royal Rumble .12%
Ladder .10%
Chain .9%
Others .20%

26. WHO IS THE BEST FOREIGN WRESTLER?

Mitsuharu Misawa .56%
Jushin Liger .14%
Shinya Hashimoto .8%
Konnan .5%
Others .17%

27. WILL 1997 BE HULK HOGAN'S FINAL YEAR IN WRESTLING?

No .73%
Yes .25%
Unsure .2%

28. WHICH WRESTLER WILL BE THE NEXT TO JUMP FEDERATIONS?

Hulk Hogan .13%
Shawn Michaels .12%
Sting .11%
Big Van Vader .9%
Lex Luger .9%
The Giant .7%
The Undertaker .6%
Others .33%

29. CAN THE NWO OVERTAKE WCW?

No .64%
Yes .26%
Unsure .10%

30. ARE THERE TOO MANY WRESTLING PAY-PER-VIEWS?

Yes .64%
No .36%

31. SHOULD ECW GET WORLD TITLE STATUS?

Yes .51%

No .44%
Unsure .5%

32. WHO IS THE MOST DANGEROUS WRESTLER?

The Giant .59%
Steve Austin .17%
Sid Vicious .6%
Big Van Vader .5%
Others .13%

33. SHOULD THE WWF MOVE RAW TO ANOTHER NIGHT?

Yes .79%
No .21%

34. CAN WOMEN'S WRESTLING THRIVE AGAIN IN THE U.S.?

No .78%
Yes .22%

35. SHOULD WRESTLING GET A PG-14 RATING?

Yes .54%
No .40%
Unsure .6%

36. WHO IS THE MOST PROMISING YOUNG STAR?

Rocky Maivia .34%
Chris Jericho .29%
Stevie Richards .7%
Others .30%

37. IS WRESTLING GANG VIOLENCE GETTING OUT OF HAND?

Yes .51%
No .49%

38. GIVE A LETTER GRADE TO WWF PRESIDENT GORILLA MONSOON FOR HIS JOB PERFORMANCE: A, B, C, D, OR F

C .38%
B .33%
A .12%
D .12%
F .5%

39. GIVE A LETTER GRADE TO WCW SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT ERIC BISCHOFF FOR HIS JOB PERFORMANCE: A, B, C, D, OR F

F .77%
D .9%
C .7%
B .4%
A .3%

40. WILL THE FOX NETWORK OR ANY OTHER NATIONAL OVER-THE-AIR NETWORK AIR A REGULAR WRESTLING PROGRAM WITHIN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS?

Yes .51%
No .49%

41. WHO HAS THE BEST CLOTHESLINE?

Lex Luger .29%
Kevin Nash .25%
The Giant .15%
The Undertaker .9%

Rick Steiner .8%
Others .14%

42. WHO HAS THE BEST DROPKICK?

Rey Mysterio Jr. .18%
Syxx .17%
Alex Wright .16%
Eddie Guerrero .14%
Jeff Jarrett .13%
Owen Hart .9%
Others .13%

43. WHO HAS THE BEST MOONSAULT?

Rey Mysterio Jr. .41%
Flash Funk .30%
Sabu .15%
Others .14%

44. WHO HAS THE BEST PILEDRIVER?

The Undertaker .92%
Others .8%

45. WHO HAS THE BEST POWERSLAM?

Davey Boy Smith .47%
Ahmed Johnson .23%
Lex Luger .22%
Others .8%

46. WHO HAS THE BEST SUBMISSION LEGLOCK?

Bret Hart .49%
Dean Malenko .40%
Others .11%

47. WHO HAS THE BEST VERTICAL SUPLEX?

Davey Boy Smith .48%
Taz .15%
Chris Benoit .11%
The Giant .9%
Shane Douglas .8%
Lex Luger .5%
Others .4%

48. WHO HAS THE BEST POWER BOMB?

Kevin Nash .37%
Sid Vicious .35%
Big Van Vader .22%
Others .6%

49. WHO HAS THE BEST OVERALL FINISHER?

"Diamond" Dallas Page
(Diamond cutter) .19%
The Undertaker
(tombstone piledriver) .18%
Steve Austin
(Stone-Cold stunner) .16%
Bret Hart (sharpshooter) .14%
Ahmed Johnson
(Pearl River plunge) .13%
The Giant (choke-slam) .9%
Others .11%

50. WHAT IS WRESTLING'S BEST MANEUVER?

The power bomb .38%
The moonsault .30%
The choke-slam .12%
Others .20%

23. WILL MUSIC CITY WRESTLING BECOME AS STRONG AS THE USWA WAS?

Yes48%
No33%
Undecided19%

24. WHO GIVES THE BEST INTER-VIEWS?

Steve Austin22%
Larry Zbyszko19%
Ric Flair16%
Hulk Hogan13%
Rocky Maivia7%
Others23%

25. WHICH IS THE BEST SPECIALTY MATCH?

Falls-count-anywhere33%
Ladder18%
Steel cage16%
Barbed wire11%
Others22%

26. WHO IS THE BEST JAPANESE WRESTLER?

Mitsuharu Misawa36%
Kensuke Sasaki21%
Ultimo Dragon18%
Taka Michinoku7%
Keiji Muto5%
Shinya Hashimoto4%
Masa Chono3%
Others6%

27. CAN THE WWF RECLAIM ITS SPOT AS THE NUMBER-ONE FEDERATION IN NORTH AMERICA?

No53%
Yes47%

28. WAS BRET HART SCREWED BY THE WWF?

Yes64%
No36%

29. WILL THE NWO SURVIVE ANOTHER YEAR?

Yes51%
No49%

30. AS SCOTT HALL OFTEN SAYS IN HIS IN-RING "SURVEYS," DO YOU GO TO WCW EVENTS PRIMARILY TO SEE THE NWO OR TO SEE WCW?

WCW52%
NWO48%

31. SHOULD ECW GET WORLD TITLE STATUS?

No51%
Yes48%
Unsure1%

32. WHO IS THE MOST DANGEROUS WRESTLER?

Ken Shamrock26%
Randy Savage23%
The Giant20%
Taz9%
Others22%

33. WAS ADDING THUNDER A GOOD IDEA BY WCW?

Yes59%
No41%

34. HAVE YOU EVER TURNED OFF A WWF SHOW BECAUSE OF LEWDNESS?

Yes53%
No47%

35. SHOULD THE WWF'S RAW IS WAR GET A PG-14 RATING?

Yes63%
No29%
Undecided8%

36. WHO IS WRESTLING'S MOST PROMISING NEW STAR?

Bill Goldberg34%
Taka Michinoku25%
Justin Credible13%
Juventud Guerrera11%
Prince Laukea6%
Others11%

37. SHOULD THERE BE MORE STRINGENT RULES ENFORCEMENT IN WRESTLING?

Yes58%
No42%

38. GIVE A LETTER GRADE TO WWF COMMISSIONER SGT. SLAUGHTER FOR HIS JOB PERFORMANCE: A, B, C, D, OR F

D37%
C25%
B20%
F13%
A5%

39. GIVE A LETTER GRADE TO WCW EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN J.J. DILLON FOR HIS JOB PERFORMANCE: A, B, C, D, OR F

C58%
D14%
B13%
A10%
F5%

40. SHOULD THIS BE RIC FLAIR'S LAST YEAR AS A WRESTLER?

Yes54%
No46%

41. WHO HAS THE BEST CLOTHES-LINE?

Rick Steiner28%
The Undertaker26%
Vader13%
Lex Luger11%
Hawk6%
Others16%

42. WHO HAS THE BEST HURACAN-RANA?

Juventud Guerrera37%
Scott Steiner33%
Ken Shamrock15%
Rey Mysterio Jr.7%
Others8%

43. WHO HAS THE BEST MOON-SAULT?

Ultimo Dragon32%
Flash Funk27%
Reckless Youth11%
Rey Mysterio Jr.10%
Others20%

44. WHO HAS THE BEST PILEDRIVER?

The Undertaker81%
Kane12%
Others7%

45. WHICH IS THE BEST SUBMISSION HOLD?

Bret Hart's sharpshooter28%
Ken Shamrock's anklelock22%
Perry Saturn's rings of Saturn15%
Chris Benoit's Crippler crossface13%
Tazz' Tazz-mission12%
Others10%

46. WHICH IS THE RISKIEST MOVE?

Corkscrew plancha31%
Outside-the-ring huracanrana22%
Michinoku driver16%
Liger bomb10%
Others21%

47. WHO HAS THE BEST SUPLEXES?

Taz38%
Ken Shamrock14%
Chris Benoit12%
Shane Douglas11%
Dean Malenko9%
Curt Hennig7%
Others9%

48. WHAT IS THE BEST TWO-MAN FINISHING MOVE USED BY A TAG TEAM?

The Steiners' top-robe bulldog34%
The Road Warriors' clothesline19%
Harlem Heat's Harlem hangover17%
The Dudleys' 3D13%
Others17%

49. WHO HAS THE BEST SUBMIS-SION LEGLOCK?

Bret Hart35%
Sting18%
Dean Malenko17%
Ken Shamrock9%
Owen Hart7%
Chris Jericho4%
Others10%

50. WHO HAS THE BEST OVERALL FINISHER?

Dallas Page (Diamond cutter)24%
Steve Austin (Stone-Cold stunner)22%
The Undertaker (tombstone piledriver)15%
Bret Hart (sharpshooter)11%
Lex Luger (torture rack)9%
Tazz (Tazz-mission)5%
Ultimo Dragon (Dragon sleeper)4%
Others10%

The 1999 PWI Poll

1. WHO IS, POUND-FOR-POUND, THE BEST WRESTLER IN THE WORLD?

Billy Kidman	17%
Chris Benoit	15%
X-Pac	13%
Rey Mysterio Jr.	12%
Rob Van Dam	9%
Juventud Guerrera	8%
Others	26%

2. IF YOU COULD WATCH THE MATCHES OF ONLY ONE WRESTLER, WHOM WOULD YOU CHOOSE?

Rey Mysterio Jr.	30%
Steve Austin	20%
Billy Kidman	10%
Chris Benoit	8%
Others	32%

3. DO YOU THINK IT'S GOOD OR BAD FOR WRESTLING PROMOTIONS TO INVOLVE MAINSTREAM STARS?

Good	54%
Bad	45%
Undecided	1%

4. DO YOU THINK TELEVISED JAPANESE WRESTLING COULD CATCH ON IN THE U.S. IF IT WERE REGULARLY TELEVISED?

No	49%
Yes	45%
Undecided	6%

5. WHICH NORTH AMERICAN FEDERATION HAS THE HIGHEST QUALITY WRESTLING?

WCW	57%
WWF	35%
ECW	8%

6. WHICH IS THE PREMIER FEDERATION IN NORTH AMERICA?

WCW	49%
WWF	48%
ECW	3%

7. WOULD YOU JUDGE WRESTLING'S IMMEDIATE FUTURE AS HOPELESS, CLOUDY, STATUS QUO, PROMISING, OR SHINING?

Shining	42%
Promising	37%
Status Quo	20%
Cloudy	1%
Hopeless	0%

8. WHO REALLY RULES MONDAY NIGHTS?

WWF	60%
WCW	40%

9. WHO WOULD WIN A NO-HOLDS-BARRED FIGHT BETWEEN ERIC BISCHOFF AND VINCE McMAHON JR.?

McMahon	52%
Bischoff	48%

10. WHO IS WRESTLING'S SEXIEST WOMAN?

Sable	29%
Tammy Lynn Sytch	19%
Kimberly	16%
Chyna	9%
Elizabeth	8%
Francine	7%
Debra McMichael	5%
Others	7%

11. WHO IS WRESTLING'S BEST TV COMMENTATOR?

Jim Ross	32%
Mike Tenay	30%
Jerry Lawler	11%
Tony Schiavone	10%
Joey Styles	7%
Bobby Heenan	6%
Others	4%

12. WOULD YOU DESCRIBE MAINSTREAM MEDIA COVERAGE OF WRESTLING AS POOR, MEDIOCRE, GOOD, OR EXCELLENT?

Good	50%
Mediocre	35%
Poor	15%

13. WOULD YOU GAUGE THE GENERAL PUBLIC'S PERCEPTION OF WRESTLING AS POOR, MEDIOCRE, GOOD, OR EXCELLENT?

Good	57%
Excellent	30%
Mediocre	7%
Poor	6%

14. WHO IS THE MOST INFLUENTIAL PERSON IN WRESTLING?

Vince McMahon	54%
Eric Bischoff	33%
Hulk Hogan	5%
Steve Austin	3%
Paul E. Dangerously	2%
Others	3%

15. WHICH IS THE BEST WEEKLY WRESTLING SHOW ON TV?

Raw	49%
Nitro	47%
ECW's weekly show	4%

16. WHICH IS THE MOST IMPORTANT CHAMPIONSHIP IN NORTH AMERICA?

WCW World	52%
WWF World	48%

17. IS WRESTLING BETTER OR WORSE THAN IT WAS FIVE YEARS AGO?

Better	99%
Worse	1%

18. WHO IS THE MOST UNDERRATED WRESTLER IN THE WORLD?

X-Pac	13%
Juventud Guerrera	12%

D-Lo Brown	10%
Billy Gunn	9%
Jerry Lynn	7%
Dave "Fit" Finlay	5%
Others	44%

19. WHO IS THE MOST OVERRATED WRESTLER IN THE WORLD?

Lex Luger	18%
Undertaker	17%
Bill Goldberg	14%
Raven	13%
Shane Douglas	10%
Konnor	8%
Reckless Youth	5%
Others	15%

20. WHO IS WRESTLING'S BEST BRAWLER?

Mankind	38%
Steve Austin	22%
Bam Bam Bigelow	10%
Mahoney	7%
The Dudleys	5%
Others	18%

21. DID THE WWF AND WCW EXPLOIT THE PERSONAL PROBLEMS OF HAWK AND SCOTT HALL TO IMPROVE RATINGS?

Yes	94%
No	6%

22. IF YOU WERE TOLD THAT ONLY ONE WRESTLING FEDERATION WOULD EXIST IN 10 YEARS, WHICH WOULD IT BE?

WCW	52%
WWF	48%

23. WHEN JESSE VENTURA COMPLETES HIS FOUR-YEAR TERM AS MINNESOTA GOVERNOR, WHAT WILL BE THE PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF THE JOB HE DID?

Good	51%
Mediocre	30%
Excellent	13%
Poor	6%

24. WHO GIVES THE BEST INTERVIEWS?

Ric Flair	24%
Steve Austin	22%
Mankind	15%
Vince McMahon	10%
Rocky Maivia	8%
Chris Jericho	6%
Hollywood Hogan	5%
Others	10%

25. WHO IS THE BEST MEXICAN WRESTLER?

Juventud Guerrera	34%
Rey Mysterio Jr.	31%
Psicosis	18%
Rayo de Jalisco Jr.	5%

Abismo Negro4%
 Dr. Wagner Jr.3%
 Others5%

26. WHO IS THE BEST JAPANESE WRESTLER?

Mitsuharu Misawa52%
 Keiji Muto25%
 Kensuke Sasaki10%
 Shinjiro Otani4%
 Jushin Liger4%
 Shinya Hashimoto3%
 Hayabusa3%

27. SHOULD THE WWF HAVE MORE "BRAWL FOR ALL" SERIES?

No82%
 Yes18%

28. WILL THE NWA SUCCEED IN ITS PLANS TO BECOME A NATIONAL FORCE AGAIN?

No88%
 Yes12%

29. WILL THE NWO ELITE LAST?

No63%
 Yes37%

30. DO YOU THINK FANS WATCH OR ATTEND WWF SHOWS FOR WRESTLING, SPORTS ENTERTAINMENT, OR BOTH?

Sports Entertainment56%
 Both30%
 Wrestling14%

31. SHOULD ECW GET WORLD TITLE STATUS?

Yes51%
 No49%

32. WHO IS THE MOST DANGEROUS WRESTLER?

Bill Goldberg32%
 Mankind25%
 Scott Steiner12%
 Ken Shamrock9%
 Tazz4%
 Others18%

33. HAVE THUNDER AND HEAT BECOME PART OF YOUR WEEKLY WRESTLING SHOW WATCHING RITUAL?

Yes61%
 No39%

34. AT WHAT AGE WOULD YOU ALLOW YOUR KID TO WATCH THE WWF?

15-1838%
 10-1425%
 Any age18%
 6-916%
 No age3%

35. DO YOU THINK FOX OR ANOTHER MAJOR MEDIA GROUP WILL SUCCESSFULLY FORM ANOTHER WRESTLING PROMOTION?

No82%
 Yes18%

36. WHO IS WRESTLING'S MOST PROMISING NEW STAR?

Billy Kidman30%
 Val Venis20%
 D-Lo Brown14%
 Edge11%
 Sable8%
 Spike Dudley5%
 Others12%

37. SHOULD THREE-WAY TITLE MATCHES BE BANNED?

No56%
 Yes44%

38. WHICH WAS THE BEST WWF PAY-PER-VIEW OF 1998?

WrestleMania XIV74%
 SummerSlam17%
 Others9%

39. WHICH WAS THE BEST WCW PAY-PER-VIEW OF 1998?

Bash at the Beach28%
 Starrcade24%
 Halloween Havoc17%
 Road Wild12%
 Others19%

40. WHICH WAS THE BEST ECW PAY-PER-VIEW OF 1998?

Heatwave49%
 Living Dangerously21%
 Wrestlepooza18%
 November to Remember12%

41. WHICH IS THE BEST TOP-ROPE MANEUVER?

Billy Kidman's shooting star press29%
 Rob Van Dam's split-legged moonsault21%
 Juventud Guerrera's 450 splash15%
 Hayabusa's stardust press13%
 Eddie Guerrero's frog splash9%
 Others13%

42. WHO POSSESSES THE BEST HURACANRANA?

Rey Mysterio Jr.54%
 Juventud Guerrera22%
 Taka Michinoku11%
 Dragon Kid5%
 Others8%

43. WHICH IS THE BEST POWER BOMB VARIATION?

Chris Candido's top-roped power bomb27%
 Jushin Liger's running Liger bomb24%
 Kevin Nash's jackknife power bomb16%
 Kenta Kobashi's orange bomb7%
 Others26%

44. WHICH IS THE BEST ACE CRUSHER VARIATION?

Steve Austin's Stone-Cold stunner42%

Johnny Ace's Ace crusher34%
 Dallas Page's Diamond cutter11%
 Disco Inferno's chortbuster5%
 Mikey Whipwreck's Whippersnapper4%
 Others4%

45. WHICH IS THE BEST SUBMISSION HOLD?

Tazz-mission23%
 Mandible claw20%
 Anklelock19%
 Lion tamer15%
 Steiner recliner8%
 Figure-four leglock7%
 Others8%

46. WHICH IS THE BEST SUPLEX VARIATION?

Mitsuharu Misawa's release tiger suplex33%
 Chris Benoit's rolling German suplex25%
 Tazz' dragon suplex13%
 Curt Hennig's fisherman suplex12%
 Others17%

47. WHICH IS THE BEST DDT VARIATION?

Chavo Guerrero Jr.'s tornado DDT29%
 Mankind's double-arm DDT24%
 Shinjiro Otani's springboard DDT18%
 Gangrel's leaping DDT8%
 Others21%

48. WHICH IS THE BEST PILEDRIVER VARIATION?

Kane's tombstone35%
 Taka Michinoku's Michinoku driver21%
 Undertaker's tombstone20%
 Bam Bam Bigelow's Greetings from Asbury Park13%
 Juventud Guerrera's Juvi driver9%
 Others2%

49. WHICH IS THE RISKIEST MANEUVER?

Space flying tiger drop42%
 Corkscrew plancha22%
 Asai moonsault16%
 Others20%

50. WHO POSSESSES THE MOST EFFECTIVE FINISHER?

Bill Goldberg (jackhammer)21%
 Steve Austin (Stone-Cold stunner)20%
 Dallas Page (Diamond cutter)18%
 Billy Kidman (shooting star press)15%
 Tazz (Tazz-mission)11%
 Rocky Maivia (Rock bottom)8%
 Others7%

The 2000 PWI Poll

1. WHO IS, POUND-FOR-POUND, THE BEST WRESTLER IN THE WORLD?

Chris Benoit	18%
Rob Van Dam	16%
Jeff Hardy	15%
Billy Kidman	14%
Rey Mysterio Jr.	9%
X-Pac	6%
Eddie Guerrero	5%
Yoshihiro Tajiri	2%
Others	15%

2. IF YOU COULD WATCH THE MATCHES OF ONLY ONE WRESTLER, WHOM WOULD YOU CHOOSE?

Rob Van Dam	20%
Chris Benoit	17%
Rey Mysterio Jr.	16%
Sabu	14%
Bill Goldberg	14%
Mick Foley	7%
Bret Hart	3%
The Hardy Boyz	3%
Others	6%

3. WHICH NORTH AMERICAN FEDERATION HAS THE HIGHEST QUALITY WRESTLING?

ECW	39%
WCW	34%
WWF	27%

4. WHICH IS THE PREMIER FEDERATION IN NORTH AMERICA?

WWF	59%
WCW	35%
ECW	6%

5. WOULD YOU JUDGE WRESTLING'S IMMEDIATE FUTURE AS HOPELESS, CLOUDY, STATUS QUO, PROMISING, OR SHINING?

Status Quo	32%
Promising	23%
Cloudy	22%
Shining	19%
Hopeless	4%

6. WHO REALLY RULES MONDAY NIGHTS?

WWF	77%
WCW	23%

7. IF YOU COULD READ ONE BOOK BY ANY WRESTLING STAR (NOT PUBLISHED SO FAR), WHAT WOULD IT BE?

Vince McMahon	37%
Steve Austin	19%
Bill Goldberg	17%
The Rock	15%
Tammy Lynn Sytch	4%
Chyna	2%
The Undertaker	1%
Others	5%

8. IF YOU COULD PICK ONE WRESTLER TO HAVE RETIRE, WHOM WOULD IT BE?

Mankind	34%
Hulk Hogan	18%
Ric Flair	16%
Steve Austin	11%
Tommy Dreamer	8%
Terry Funk	7%
The Undertaker	3%
Others	3%

9. WHO IS WRESTLING'S SEXIEST WOMAN?

Torrie Wilson	28%
Kimberly	16%
Elizabeth	12%
The Kat	11%
Chyna	10%
Dawn Marie	8%
Francine	7%
Ivory	4%
Terri	3%
Others	1%

10. WHO IS THE SEXIEST MALE WRESTLER?

The Rock	31%
Chris Jericho	20%
Buff Bagwell	19%
Edge	11%
Test	5%
Bret Hart	4%
Val Venis	4%
Bill Goldberg	2%
Sting	2%
Others	2%

11. WHO IS WRESTLING'S BEST TV COMMENTATOR?

Jim Ross	34%
Joey Styles	23%
Jerry Lawler	21%
Tony Schiavone	8%
Michael Cole	6%
Bobby Heenan	5%
Joel Gertner	2%
Others	1%

12. WOULD YOU DESCRIBE MAIN-STREAM MEDIA COVERAGE OF WRESTLING AS POOR, MEDIOCRE, GOOD, OR EXCELLENT?

Poor	32%
Good	30%
Mediocre	28%
Excellent	10%

13. WHO IS THE MOST INFLUENTIAL PERSON IN WRESTLING?

Vince McMahon	59%
Vince Russo	20%
Paul Heyman	9%
Bill Busch	5%
Brad Siegel	3%
Antonio Inoki	2%
Others	2%

14. WOULD YOU GAUGE THE GENERAL PUBLIC'S PERCEPTION OF WRESTLING AS POOR, MEDIOCRE, GOOD, OR EXCELLENT?

Mediocre	33%
Poor	26%
Good	22%
Excellent	19%

15. WHICH IS THE BEST WEEKLY WRESTLING SHOW ON TV?

Raw	39%
Nitro	26%
Smackdown	19%
ECW On TNN	12%
Thunder	3%
Others	1%

16. WHICH IS THE MOST IMPORTANT CHAMPIONSHIP IN NORTH AMERICA?

WWF World	42%
WCW World	37%
ECW World	21%

17. IS WRESTLING BETTER OR WORSE THAN IT WAS FIVE YEARS AGO?

Better	85%
Worse	15%

18. ARE GOLDBERG'S BEST DAYS AHEAD OF HIM?

Yes	72%
No	28%

19. WHO IS THE MOST UNDERRATED WRESTLER IN THE WORLD?

The Hardy Boyz	25%
Mike Awesome	23%
Vader	12%
The Big Show	4%
Little Guido	3%
Big Bossman	3%
Others	30%

20. WHO IS THE MOST OVERRATED WRESTLER IN THE WORLD?

Kevin Nash	21%
Sid Vicious	19%
Mankind	16%
Jushin Liger	8%
Chyna	5%
Rob Van Dam	5%
Chris Jericho	4%
The Rock	3%
Test	3%
Chris Benoit	1%
Others	15%

21. WHO IS WRESTLING'S BEST BRAWLER?

Meng	23%
The Acolytes	22%
Rick Steiner	11%
The Sandman	11%
Chris Benoit	7%
Atsushi Onita	7%
Vader	4%
Big Bossman	3%
Others	12%

22. WHO GIVES THE BEST INTER-VIEWS?

The Rock	23%
Vince McMahon	21%
Triple-H	17%
Steve Austin	16%
Jeff Jarrett	7%
Dallas Page	6%
Shane Douglas	6%
Chris Jericho	3%
Others	1%

23. WHO IS THE BEST MEXICAN WRESTLER?

Super Crazy	30%
Rey Mysterio Jr.	24%
El Hijo del Santo	15%
Juventud Guerrera	14%
Psicosis	4%
Dr. Wagner Jr.	3%
Rayo de Jalisco Jr.	3%
Others	7%

24. WHO IS THE BEST JAPANESE WRESTLER?

Mitsuharu Misawa	54%
Keiji Muto	21%

- Jushin Liger7%
Naoya Ogawa7%
H3%
Masa Chono3%
Genichiro Tenryu2%
Masato Tanaka1%
Others2%
- 25. WHO IS THE MOST DANGEROUS WRESTLER?**
Bill Goldberg33%
Meng16%
New Jack12%
Steve Williams12%
The Acolytes11%
Vader3%
Others13%
- 26. WHO IS WRESTLING'S MOST PROMISING NEW STAR?**
Rhino25%
The Hardy Boyz24%
Torie Wilson9%
Test8%
Lash LeRoux7%
Kurt Angle6%
Evan Karagias5%
Others16%
- 27. WOULD YOU HAVE CONTINUED THE PPV AFTER OWEN HART DIED?**
Yes74%
No26%
- 28. AT PRESS TIME, WWF STOCK WAS SELLING AT 14 1/2. WHERE DO YOU SEE WWF STOCK A YEAR FROM NOW?**
About the same35%
Double24%
Half what it is now22%
Less than half11%
Triple4%
- 29. SHOULD HARDCORE WRESTLING BE OUTLAWED?**
No58%
Yes42%
- 30. WILL WE EVER SEE A WRESTLERS' UNION?**
No52%
Yes44%
Not sure4%
- 31. HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE FOR ECW TO BE ON PAR WITH WCW AND THE WWF?**
3 to 5 years27%
1 to 3 years25%
Never21%
5 to 10 years17%
There now10%
- 32. SHOULD ECW CHANGE NIGHTS ON TNN?**
Yes68%
No32%
- 33. WHO DO YOU THINK WILL BE NUMBER ONE IN NEXT YEAR'S "PWI 500"?**
Bill Goldberg26%
The Rock22%
Chris Benoit20%
Rob Van Dam15%
Bret Hart5%
Vader3%
Triple-H3%
Others6%
- 34. HAS WCW MADE A SMART MOVE BY CHANGING ITS MONDAY NIGHT TIME SLOT?**
No52%
Yes48%

- 35. WILL THE WWF'S LOSS OF ADVERTISERS HAVE A GOOD LONG-TERM EFFECT ON WRESTLING IN GENERAL?**
No56%
Yes44%
- 36. IS IT WRONG TO HAVE MEN vs. WOMEN MATCHES?**
No53%
Yes47%
- 37. WHAT DO YOU EXPECT THE MONDAY RATINGS GAP TO BE A YEAR FROM NOW?**
Significantly smaller40%
Slightly smaller28%
Slightly larger24%
Significantly larger8%
- 38. WHICH WAS THE BEST WWF PAY-PER-VIEW OF 1999?**
WrestleMania XV53%
St. Valentine's Day Massacre16%
SummerSlam11%
Royal Rumble5%
Backlash3%
Others12%
- 39. WHICH WAS THE BEST WCW PAY-PER-VIEW OF 1999?**
Halloween Havoc33%
Mayhem30%
Great American Bash19%
Starrcade7%
Others11%
- 40. WHICH WAS THE BEST ECW PAY-PER-VIEW OF 1999?**
Anarchy Ruiz35%
Living Dangerously30%
Hardcore Heaven19%
Guilty as Charged10%
November to Remember4%
Heatwave2%
- 41. WHICH IS THE BEST TOP-ROPE MANEUVER?**
Jeff Hardy's flipping senton22%
Billy Kidman's shooting star press17%
Rob Van Dam's five-star frog splash16%
Mike Awesome's Awesome bomb12%
Eddie Guerrero's frog splash10%
Others23%
- 42. WHAT IS THE BEST HURACANRANA VARIATION?**
Dragon Kid's Dragonrana23%
Rey Mysterio Jr.'s springboard huracanrana19%
Dragon Kid's blind huracanrana15%
Super Delfin's Delfinlana14%
Mike Quackenbush's backward huracanrana8%
Others21%
- 43. WHICH IS THE BEST POWER BOMB VARIATION?**
Mike Awesome's Awesome bomb26%
Jushin Liger's running Liger bomb21%
Sid Vicious' power bomb15%
Kevin Nash's power bomb13%
Vader's high angle power bomb7%
Others18%

- 44. WHICH IS THE BEST PILEDRIVER VARIATION?**
Kane's tombstone piledriver25%
Jerry Lynn's cradle piledriver18%
Juventud Guerrera's Juvi-driver17%
Taka Michinoku's Michinoku driver15%
Undertaker's tombstone piledriver8%
Others17%
- 45. WHICH IS THE BEST SUPLEX VARIATION?**
Mitsuharu Misawa's release tiger suplex21%
The Rock's Rock bottom20%
Chris Benoit's rolling German suplex19%
Jun Akiyama's exploder '98 suplex14%
Curt Hennig's fisherman suplex10%
Others16%
- 46. WHO HAS THE MOST EFFECTIVE MARTIAL ARTS KICKS?**
Rob Van Dam24%
X-Pac21%
Yoshihiro Tajiri18%
Jerry Flynn14%
Toshiaki Kawada11%
Steve Blackman7%
Others5%
- 47. WHAT IS THE HIGHEST IMPACT MANEUVER?**
Goldberg's spear32%
Triple-H's pedigree16%
Chris Benoit's knife-edge chops15%
Steve Williams' backdrop driver11%
Akira Taue's choke-slam to the floor9%
Others17%
- 48. WHICH IS THE MOST EFFECTIVE SUBMISSION HOLD?**
Scorpion deathlock/sharpshooter28%
Mandible claw18%
Figure-four leglock16%
Walls of Jericho9%
Crippler crossface8%
Tarantula7%
Others14%
- 49. WHICH IS THE RISKIEST MANEUVER?**
Spaceman plancha into shooting star press20%
Space flying tiger drop18%
Twisting plancha15%
Star dust press13%
Cancun tomado moonsault8%
Others26%
- 50. WHO POSSESSES THE MOST EFFECTIVE FINISHER?**
Goldberg (jackhammer)19%
Steve Austin (Stone-Cold stunner)17%
Rob Van Dam (five-star frog splash)14%
Triple-H (pedigree)13%
Mitsuharu Misawa (emerald erosion)12%
Sting (scorpion deathlock)10%
Others15%

The 2001 PWI Poll

1. WHO IS, POUND-FOR-POUND, THE BEST WRESTLER IN THE WORLD?

Chris Benoit	.23%
Kurt Angle	.21%
Rob Van Dam	.15%
Jeff Hardy	.14%
Lance Storm	.5%
Yoshihiro Tajiri	.4%
Scott Steiner	.3%
Others	.15%

2. IF YOU COULD WATCH THE MATCHES OF ONLY ONE WRESTLER, WHOM WOULD YOU CHOOSE?

Yoshihiro Tajiri	.21%
Chris Benoit	.14%
Triple-H	.13%
The Hardy Boyz	.11%
Rob Van Dam	.11%
Scott Steiner	.7%
The Rock	.6%
Others	.17%

3. WOULD YOU JUDGE WRESTLING'S IMMEDIATE FUTURE AS HOPELESS, CLOUDY, STATUS QUO, PROMISING, OR SHINING?

Status quo	.38%
Cloudy	.22%
Promising	.20%
Shining	.20%
Hopeless	.0%

4. WHO IS WRESTLING'S SEXIEST WOMAN?

Major Gunns	.31%
Trish Stratus	.30%
Stacy Keibler	.16%
Lita	.7%
Francine	.6%
Chyna	.4%
Terri	.4%
Dawn Marie	.2%

5. WHO IS WRESTLING'S SEXIEST MAN?

The Rock	.34%
Jeff Hardy	.19%
Edge	.13%
Triple-H	.12%
Chris Jericho	.12%
Christian	.4%
Booker T	.3%
Shane Helms	.1%
Bryan Clark	.1%
Others	.1%

6. WHO IS WRESTLING'S BEST TV COMMENTATOR?

Jim Ross	.45%
Jerry Lawler	.24%
Joey Styles	.10%
Michael Cole	.9%
Tony Schiavone	.5%
Tazz	.4%
Cyrus	.1%
Scott Hudson	.1%
Others	.1%

7. WOULD YOU DESCRIBE MAIN-STREAM MEDIA COVERAGE OF WRESTLING AS POOR, MEDIOCRE, GOOD, OR EXCELLENT?

Good	.33%
------	------

Mediocre	.30%
Excellent	.23%
Poor	.14%

8. WOULD YOU GAUGE THE GENERAL PUBLIC'S PERCEPTION OF WRESTLING AS POOR, MEDIOCRE, GOOD, OR EXCELLENT?

Mediocre	.30%
Good	.27%
Poor	.24%
Excellent	.19%

9. WHICH IS THE BEST WEEKLY WRESTLING SHOW ON TV?

Raw	.52%
Smackdown	.31%
Nitro	.10%
Sunday Night Heat	.4%
Thunder	.2%
Others	.1%

10. IS WRESTLING BETTER OR WORSE THAN IT WAS FIVE YEARS AGO?

Better	.79%
Worse	.21%

11. WILL ECW SURVIVE ANOTHER YEAR?

No	.59%
Yes	.41%

12. HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE ERIC BISCHOFF TO MAKE WCW A SERIOUS RIVAL TO THE WWF AGAIN?

1 to 3 years	.29%
Never	.27%
3 to 5 years	.22%
5 to 10 years	.16%
There now	.6%

13. WHERE WILL HULK HOGAN FINISH HIS CAREER?

WWF	.52%
WCW	.48%

14. IS SHAWN MICHAELS MAKING A WISE MOVE BY ATTEMPTING A COMEBACK?

No	.55%
Yes	.45%

15. WILL THE XFL HURT OR HELP THE WWF?

Help	.57%
Hurt	.43%

16. WHAT WWF-WCW DREAM MATCH WOULD DRAW THE MOST INTEREST FROM FANS?

Steve Austin vs. Bill Goldberg	.51%
Triple-H vs. Bill Goldberg	.37%
The Rock vs. Scott Steiner	.4%
Others	.8%

17. WILL THE ROCK STILL BE IN WRESTLING FIVE YEARS FROM NOW?

Yes	.56%
No	.44%

18. WILL VINCE RUSSO EVER WORK IN WRESTLING AGAIN?

No	.71%
Yes	.29%

19. HOW MUCH OF AN IMPACT HAS THE PTC HAD ON THE WWF?

Significant impact	.40%
Tremendous impact	.31%

Minimal impact	.25%
No impact	.4%

20. WHO IS THE MOST UNDERRATED WRESTLER IN THE WORLD?

Lance Storm	.24%
Yoshihiro Tajiri	.22%
C.W. Anderson	.21%
Jerry Lynn	.15%
William Regal	.12%
Crowbar	.3%
Raven	.2%
Others	.1%

21. WHO IS THE MOST OVERRATED WRESTLER IN THE WORLD?

Billy Gunn	.21%
Kevin Nash	.17%
Buff Bagwell	.13%
Sting	.12%
Steve Austin	.12%
Chyna	.9%
The Sandman	.7%
Kane	.3%
Steve Corino	.3%
Others	.3%

22. WHO IS WRESTLING'S BEST BRAWLER?

Steve Austin	.26%
Rhino	.19%
Haku	.17%
The Undertaker	.12%
The Sandman	.9%
The Acolytes	.8%
Raven	.4%
Kronic	.3%
Crowbar	.1%
Others	.1%

23. WHO GIVES THE BEST INTER-VIEWS?

Triple-H	.18%
Scott Steiner	.17%
The Rock	.15%
Steve Austin	.13%
Vince McMahon	.11%
Kurt Angle	.10%
Christian & Edge	.9%
Mike Sanders	.3%
Lance Storm	.2%
Others	.2%

24. WOULD ECW BE BETTER OFF IF IT HAD NEVER ACCEPTED THE TNN DEAL?

No	.61%
Yes	.39%

25. WHO IS THE MOST DANGEROUS WRESTLER?

Scott Steiner	.30%
Steve Austin	.24%
Rhino	.21%
Chris Benoit	.10%
The Undertaker	.7%
Chris Jericho	.3%
Others	.5%

26. WHO IS WRESTLING'S MOST PROMISING NEW STAR?

Sean O'Haire	.18%
Mark Jindrak	.15%
Trish Stratus	.15%
Mike Sanders	.14%

K-Kwik	12%
The Haas Brothers	6%
Stacy Keibler	6%
Shelton Benjamin	1%
Others	13%

27. AT PRESS TIME, WWF/E STOCK WAS SELLING AT \$20.45 PER SHARE. WHERE DO YOU SEE WWF/E STOCK A YEAR FROM NOW?

About the same	40%
Double	21%
Half what is now	20%
Less than half	10%
Triple	9%

28. WHO WAS THE WWF MVP OF 2000?

Triple-H	26%
The Rock	22%
Vince McMahon	21%
Kurt Angle	19%
Stephanie McMahon-Helmsley	4%
Jim Ross	3%
Others	5%

29. WHO WAS THE WCW MVP OF 2000?

Scott Steiner	43%
Booker T	33%
Jeff Jarrett	23%
Others	1%

30. WHO WAS THE ECW MVP OF 2000?

Paul Heyman	56%
Tommy Dreamer	16%
The Sandman	9%
Justin Credible	8%
Steve Corino	7%
Others	4%

31. SHOULD BACKYARD WRESTLING BE OUTLAWED?

Yes	81%
No	19%

32. WHO DO YOU THINK WILL BE NUMBER ONE IN NEXT YEAR'S "PWI 500"?

The Rock	27%
Scott Steiner	21%
Kurt Angle	20%
Steve Austin	13%
Triple-H	9%
Chris Benoit	6%
Others	4%

33. WHAT DO YOU EXPECT THE MONDAY NIGHT RATINGS GAP TO BE A YEAR FROM NOW?

Significantly smaller	39%
Slightly smaller	36%
Slightly larger	15%
Significantly larger	10%

34. WOULD WCW BE WISE TO TONE DOWN SEX AND BAD LANGUAGE?

Yes	58%
No	42%

35. WILL SCOTT HALL EVER WORK IN A MAJOR PROMOTION AGAIN?

No	52%
Yes	48%

36. WHICH WAS THE BEST WWF PAY-PER-VIEW OF 2000?

Judgment Day	22%
Royal Rumble	21%
No Way Out	19%
Fully Loaded	13%
WrestleMania 2000	9%
SummerSlam	6%
Others	10%

37. WHICH WAS THE BEST WCW PAY-PER-VIEW OF 2000?

Bash at the Beach	26%
Mayhem	17%
Spring Stampede	16%
New Blood Rising	15%
Starrcade	14%
Fall Brawl	6%
Others	6%

38. WHICH WAS THE BEST ECW PAY-PER-VIEW OF 2000?

Anarchy Rulz	40%
Guilty as Charged	29%
November to Remember	19%
Hardcore Heaven	8%
Living Dangerously	2%
Massacre on 34th Street	2%

39. WHO IS THE BEST MEXICAN WRESTLER?

Super Crazy	30%
Rey Mysterio Jr.	21%
El Hijo del Santo	13%
Atlantis	10%
Ricky Marvin	9%
Dr. Wagner Jr.	8%
Others	9%

40. WHO IS THE BEST JAPANESE WRESTLER?

Jun Akiyama	24%
Toshiaki Kawada	20%
Yoshihiro Tajiri	19%
Kensuke Sasaki	12%
Shiima Nobunaga	6%
Others	19%

41. WHICH IS THE BEST TOP-ROPE MANEUVER?

Rob Van Dam's Van Terminator	33%
Dragon Kid's Dragonrana	19%
Jeff Hardy's swanton	15%
Mike Awesome's Awesome bomb	12%
Christopher Daniels' floating moonsault	7%
Lita's swinging huracanrana	6%
Others	8%

42. WHICH IS THE BEST POWER BOMB VARIATION?

Mike Awesome's Awesome bomb	26%
Undertaker's last ride	20%
Swinger's release orange bomb	13%
Tatsuhito Takaiwa's triple bomb	11%
Kaz Hayashi's spider bomb	9%
Others	21%

43. WHAT IS THE BEST PILEDRIIVER VARIATION?

Rhino's second turnbuckle piledriver	25%
Triple-H's pedigree	22%
Justin Credible's "That's Incredible"	21%
Jerry Lynn's cradle piledriver	17%
Dr. Wagner Jr.'s Michinoku driver II	11%
Others	4%

44. WHAT IS THE BEST SUPLEX VARIATION?

Kurt Angle's belly-to-belly superplex	34%
The Rock's Rock bottom	20%

Jun Akiyama's exploder suplex	18%
Chris Benoit's rolling German suplex	14%
Booker T's uranage suplex	4%
Others	10%

45. WHAT IS THE BEST OFFENSIVE STRIKE?

Genichiro Tenryu's chops	18%
Mitsuharu Misawa's elbow strikes	17%
Chris Benoit's chops	16%
Jushin Liger's palm strikes	14%
William Regal's European uppercuts	13%
Others	22%

46. WHO HAS THE MOST EFFECTIVE KICKS?

Yoshihiro Tajiri	24%
Rob Van Dam	21%
Booker T	18%
Bill Goldberg	15%
Toshiaki Kawada	14%
Others	8%

47. WHAT IS THE HIGHEST-IMPACT MANEUVER?

Bill Goldberg's spear	30%
Kensuke Sasaki's Northern Lights bomb	12%
Goldberg's jackhammer	11%
Bradshaw's clothesline from hell	9%
The Dudley Boyz' 3D	7%
Chavo Guerrero Jr.'s brainbuster	5%
Others	26%

48. WHICH IS THE MOST EFFECTIVE SUBMISSION HOLD?

Scott Steiner's Steiner recliner	21%
Chris Benoit's Crippler crossface	20%
Chris Jericho's Walls of Jericho	14%
Lance Storm's maple leaf	11%
El Hijo del Santo's camel clutch	6%
Others	28%

49. WHICH IS THE RISKIEST MANEUVER?

Jodie Fleisch's shooting star press to the floor	21%
Ricky Marvin's spaceman corkscrew plancha	19%
Dragon Kid's Dragonrana	18%
Great Sasuke's Sasuke special II	13%
Matt Hardy's moonsault press to the floor	11%
Others	18%

50. WHO POSSESSES THE MOST EFFECTIVE FINISHER?

Steve Austin (Stone-Cold stunner)	23%
Scott Steiner (Steiner recliner)	17%
Rob Van Dam (Van Terminator)	14%
Triple-H (pedigree)	12%
Bill Goldberg (jackhammer)	11%
Kurt Angle (Olympic slam)	7%
Kensuke Sasaki (Northern Lights bomb)	5%
Others	11%

The 2002 PWI Poll

1. WHO IS POUND-FOR-POUND, THE BEST WRESTLER IN THE WORLD?

Rob Van Dam	22%
Chris Jericho	20%
Kurt Angle	17%
Tajiri	9%
William Regal	8%
Others	24%

2. IF YOU COULD WATCH THE MATCHES OF ONLY ONE WRESTLER, WHOM WOULD YOU CHOOSE?

Triple-H	24%
Steve Austin	19%
Rob Van Dam	18%
The Rock	15%
Kurt Angle	12%
Others	12%

3. WOULD YOU JUDGE WRESTLING'S IMMEDIATE FUTURE AS HOPELESS, CLOUDY, STATUS QUO, PROMISING, OR SHINING?

Status quo	33%
Cloudy	26%
Promising	24%
Shining	15%
Hopeless	2%

4. WHO IS WRESTLING'S SEXIEST WOMAN?

Stacy Keibler	23%
Trish Stratus	19%
Torrie Wilson	17%
Lita	14%
Stephanie McMahon-Helmsley	9%
Others	18%

5. WHO IS WRESTLING'S SEXIEST MAN?

The Rock	34%
Triple-H	24%
Val Venis	20%
Rob Van Dam	10%
Edge	6%
Others	6%

6. WHO IS WRESTLING'S BEST TV ANNOUNCER?

Jim Ross	55%
Jerry Lawler	16%
Paul Heyman	7%
Jim Cornette	5%
Others	17%

7. WOULD YOU DESCRIBE MAIN-STREAM COVERAGE OF WRESTLING AS POOR, MEDIOCRE, GOOD, OR EXCELLENT?

Good	31%
Mediocre	31%
Excellent	26%
Poor	12%

8. WOULD YOU GAUGE THE GENERAL PUBLIC'S PERCEPTION OF WRESTLING AS POOR, MEDIOCRE, GOOD, OR EXCELLENT?

Mediocre	29%
Good	28%
Excellent	26%
Poor	17%

9. WHICH FORMER WCW OR ECW WRESTLER SHOULD THE WWF SIGN?

Jeff Jarrett	31%
--------------	-----

Scott Steiner	22%
The Sandman	7%
C.W. Anderson	7%
Randy Savage	6%
Others	27%

10. IS WRESTLING BETTER OR WORSE THAN IT WAS FIVE YEARS AGO?

Worse	60%
Better	40%

11. WHICH DEVELOPMENTAL WRESTLER SHOULD THE WWF PROMOTE NEXT?

Charlie (R.C.) Haas	18%
Victoria	14%
Randy Orton	13%
The Island Boys	11%
Brock Lesnar	10%
Steve Bradley	8%
The Prototype	7%
Others	19%

12. WHO IS THE MOST PROMISING CAREER-LONG INDEPENDENT WRESTLER?

Chris Daniels	23%
Scot Andrews	17%
Michael Modest	12%
Low-Ki	11%
Joey Matthews	6%
American Dragon	5%
Christian York	5%
Others	21%

13. WHAT ARE THE IMMEDIATE PROSPECTS FOR THE WWA?

Will become a permanent fixture	54%
Will fold within six months	46%

14. IF THE WWA SURVIVES THE NEXT SIX MONTHS, WHAT ARE ITS LONG-RANGE PROSPECTS?

Will become North America's number-two promotion	29%
Will be a healthy, but limited competitor	27%
Will go out of business	25%
Will compete directly against the WWF	19%

15. WHAT ARE THE IMMEDIATE PROSPECTS FOR THE XWF?

Will become a permanent fixture	58%
Will fold within six months	42%

16. IF THE XWF SURVIVES THE NEXT SIX MONTHS, WHAT ARE ITS LONG-RANGE PROSPECTS?

Will become North America's number-two promotion	31%
Will compete directly against the WWF	27%
Will be a healthy, but limited competitor	26%
Will go out of business	16%

17. WILL THE WWF RESOLVE ITS CONTRACT DISPUTE WITH DIRECTV?

Yes	78%
No	22%

18. CAN THE WWF SUCCESSFULLY SPLIT INTO TWO PROMOTIONS?

Yes	86%
No	14%

19. ARE SCOTT HALL, KEVIN NASH, AND HULK HOGAN A WORTHWHILE RISK?

Yes	55%
No	45%

20. WHO IS THE MOST UNDERRATED WRESTLER IN THE WORLD?

Tajiri	25%
Lance Storm	20%
William Regal	13%
Chris Jericho	12%
Test	6%
Christian	6%
Others	18%

21. WHO IS THE MOST OVERRATED WRESTLER IN THE WORLD?

Chris Jericho	21%
The Undertaker	19%
Kane	18%
Edge	16%
The Rock	8%
Kevin Nash	7%
Others	11%

22. WHO IS WRESTLING'S BEST BRAWLER?

Steve Austin	25%
The Undertaker	18%
The Dudley Boyz	17%
The Acolytes	15%
Kane	12%
Others	13%

23. WHO GIVES THE BEST INTERVIEWS?

Steve Austin	22%
The Rock	14%
Ric Flair	13%
Vince McMahon	12%
Triple-H	9%
Kurt Angle	9%
Others	21%

24. WHICH McMAHON SHOULD BE FEATURED PROMINENTLY ON TV?

Vince McMahon	47%
Stephanie McMahon-Helmsley	26%
Shane McMahon	14%
No McMahon	13%

25. WHO IS THE MOST DANGEROUS WRESTLER?

Steve Austin	21%
The Dudley Boyz	20%
The Acolytes	18%
The Undertaker	15%
Kane	9%
Others	21%

26. WHO IS THE WWF'S MOST PROMISING NEW STAR?

Maven	23%
Stacy Keibler	20%
Chuck Palumbo	18%
Jazz	14%
Torrie Wilson	12%
The Hurricane	9%
Others	4%

27. AT PRESS TIME, WWF/E STOCK WAS SELLING AT \$14.27 PER SHARE. WHERE DO YOU SEE WWF/E STOCK A YEAR FROM NOW?

About the same	58%
----------------	-----

- Half what it is now21%
 Double11%
 Less than half9%
 Triple1%
- 28. WHO WAS THE WWF MVP OF 2001?**
 Steve Austin24%
 Kurt Angle22%
 The Rock15%
 Chris Jericho14%
 Rob Van Dam11%
 Others14%
- 29. AT PRESS TIME, RAW AND SMACK-DOWN WERE AVERAGING NIELSEN RATINGS OF 4.6 AND 4.2, RESPECTIVELY. WHERE DO YOU SEE THOSE RATINGS A YEAR FROM NOW?**
 One point higher35%
 About the same31%
 Two or more points higher24%
 One point lower10%
- 30. HAS THE INTERNET HELPED OR HURT PROFESSIONAL WRESTLING?**
 Helped71%
 Hurt29%
- 31. HOW MUCH DID THE XFL HURT THE CREDIBILITY OF THE WWF?**
 Had minimal effect39%
 Had a significant effect37%
 Had no effect13%
 Had a disastrous effect11%
- 32. WHO DO YOU THINK WILL BE NUMBER ONE IN NEXT YEAR'S "PW/500"?**
 Steve Austin26%
 The Rock23%
 Kurt Angle18%
 Chris Jericho16%
 Triple-H9%
 Others8%
- 33. WHO IS WRESTLING'S NEXT BREAKOUT HOLLYWOOD STAR?**
 Triple-H28%
 Kurt Angle25%
 Edge16%
 Rob Van Dam15%
 Chris Jericho8%
 The Prototype1%
 Others7%
- 34. WHEN WILL BILL GOLDBERG DEBUT IN THE WWF?**
 Never38%
 200424%
 200223%
 200311%
 20054%
- 35. WHICH WAS THE BEST WWF PAY-PER-VIEW OF 2001?**
 WrestleMania X-Seven57%
 King of the Ring13%
 Survivor Series11%
 Vengeance6%
 Invasion5%
 No Way Out5%
 Others3%
- 36. WHAT WILL BE THE STATE OF THE WWF WOMEN'S DIVISION A YEAR FROM NOW?**
 Worse than now38%
 About the same33%
 Nonexistent20%
 Better than now6%
 Fantastic3%
- 37. WHAT WILL BE THE STATE OF THE WWF CRUISERWEIGHT DIVISION A YEAR FROM NOW?**
 About the same32%

- Better than now29%
 Worse than now26%
 Nonexistent9%
 Fantastic4%
- 38. HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE ARENA FANS' REACTION TO WWF MATCHES?**
 Enthusiastic41%
 Incredible28%
 Average20%
 Tepid8%
 Poor3%
- 39. WHO IS THE BEST MEXICAN WRESTLER?**
 Black Tiger34%
 Dr. Wagner Jr.17%
 El Hijo del Santo12%
 Ricky Marvin11%
 Hector Garza9%
 Super Crazy8%
 Others9%
- 40. WHO IS THE BEST JAPANESE WRESTLER?**
 Keiji Muto31%
 Toshiaki Kawada18%
 Yuji Nagata15%
 Jun Akiyama10%
 Tajiri8%
 Jushin Liger6%
 Others12%
- 41. WHICH IS THE BEST TOP-ROPE MANEUVER?**
 Rob Van Dam's five-star frog splash24%
 Dragon Kid's Dragonrana23%
 Kurt Angle's moonsault press17%
 Hector Garza's Cancun tornado press10%
 Tokyo Magnum's shooting star press8%
 Jeff Hardy's swanton7%
 Others11%
- 42. WHAT IS THE BEST POWER BOMB VARIATION?**
 Undertaker's last ride22%
 Mitsuharu Misawa's super tiger driver16%
 Dudleys' super bomb14%
 Kensuke Sasaki's gamma bomb12%
 Tatsuhiro Takaiwa's triple bomb10%
 Albert's Baldo bomb9%
 Others17%
- 43. WHAT IS THE BEST ACE CRUSHER VARIATION?**
 Steve Austin's stunner33%
 Taiyo Kea's Hawaiian crusher14%
 Matt Hardy's twist of fate13%
 Gran Hamada's Hama-chan cutter12%
 Spike Dudley's Dudley dog10%
 Others9%
- 44. WHAT IS THE BEST SUPLEX VARIATION?**
 Kurt Angle's release belly-to-belly suplex25%
 Rock's Rock bottom uranage suplex22%
 Jun Akiyama's arm clutch exploder suplex18%
 Mr. Perfect's Perfectplex13%

- Manami Toyota's ocean cyclone suplex11%
 Others11%
- 45. WHAT IS THE BEST OFFENSIVE STRIKE?**
 Keiji Muto's shining wizard knee strike21%
 William Regal's European uppercut17%
 Jushin Liger's palm strike15%
 Chris Benoit's chops14%
 Mitsuharu Misawa's elbow strike13%
 Kensuke Sasaki's gau punch7%
 Others13%
- 46. WHO HAS THE MOST EFFECTIVE KICKS?**
 Tajiri31%
 Rob Van Dam21%
 Shinya Hashimoto14%
 Toshiaki Kawada12%
 Test11%
 Others11%
- 47. WHAT IS THE HIGHEST-IMPACT MANEUVER?**
 Undertaker's last ride23%
 Jushin Liger's avalanche brainbuster21%
 Bradshaw's clothesline from hell13%
 The Dudley Boyz' 3D10%
 Kurt Angle's Olympic slam9%
 Test's high kick of death7%
 Mitsuharu Misawa's super tiger driver6%
 Others11%
- 48. WHICH IS THE MOST EFFECTIVE SUBMISSION HOLD?**
 Chris Jericho's Walls of Jericho28%
 Kurt Angle's anklelock20%
 El Hijo del Santo's camel clutch14%
 Rock's sharpshooter10%
 Tajiri's tarantula8%
 Yuji Nagata's Nagata lock II6%
 Others14%
- 49. WHICH IS THE RISKIEST MANEUVER?**
 Ricky Marvin's spaceman corkscrew plancha23%
 Dragon Kid's Dragonrana22%
 Dragon Kid's Dragon ray blind huracanrana21%
 The Great Sasuke's Sasuke special II13%
 Red's Red star press7%
 Others14%
- 50. WHO POSSESSES THE MOST EFFECTIVE FINISHER?**
 Steve Austin (Stone-Cold stunner)15%
 The Dudley Boyz (3D)14%
 Chris Jericho (Walls of Jericho)13%
 Triple-H (pedigree)12%
 Keiji Muto (shining wizard)11%
 Undertaker (last ride)10%
 Black Tiger (triple-moonsault)9%
 The Rock (Rock bottom)8%
 Others8%

The 2003 PWI Poll

1. WHO IS, POUND-FOR-POUND, THE BEST WRESTLER IN THE WORLD?

Chris Benoit 21%
Kurt Angle 17%
Low-Ki 14%
Rob Van Dam 13%
Rey Mysterio Jr. 7%
Chris Jericho 6%
Others 22%

2. IF YOU COULD WATCH THE MATCHES OF ONLY ONE WRESTLER, WHOM WOULD YOU CHOOSE?

Kurt Angle 27%
Chris Benoit 24%
Edge 16%
Rey Mysterio Jr. 12%
Others 21%

3. WOULD YOU JUDGE WRESTLING'S IMMEDIATE FUTURE AS HOPELESS, CLOUDY, STATUS QUO, PROMISING, OR SHINING?

Status quo 34%
Cloudy 29%
Promising 24%
Hopeless 9%
Shining 4%

4. WHO IS WRESTLING'S SEXIEST WOMAN?

Torrie Wilson 21%
Trish Stratus 19%
Stacy Keibler 18%
Stephanie McMahon 11%
Dawn Marie 9%
Victoria 8%
Others 14%

5. WHO IS WRESTLING'S SEXIEST MAN?

Edge 25%
The Rock 23%
Rob Van Dam 17%
Jeff Hardy 9%
Randy Orton 9%
Others 17%

6. WHO IS WRESTLING'S BEST TV ANNOUNCER?

Jim Ross 35%
Tazz 21%
Mike Tenay 18%
Jerry Lawler 9%
Michael Cole 8%
Others 9%

7. WOULD YOU GAUGE THE GENERAL PUBLIC'S PERCEPTION OF WRESTLING AS POOR, MEDIOCRE, GOOD, OR EXCELLENT?

Mediocre 31%
Good 29%
Poor 28%
Excellent 12%

8. WOULD YOU DESCRIBE MAIN-STREAM COVERAGE OF WRESTLING AS POOR, MEDIOCRE, GOOD, OR EXCELLENT?

Good 32%
Mediocre 30%
Excellent 21%
Poor 17%

9. DO YOU THINK STEVE AUSTIN WILL REMAIN IN WWE ON A LONG-TERM BASIS THIS TIME?

Yes 68%
No 32%

10. IS WRESTLING BETTER OR WORSE THAN IT WAS FIVE YEARS AGO?

Worse 92%
Better 8%

11. WHAT FREE AGENT SHOULD WWE SIGN TO A CONTRACT?

Sting 41%
Christopher Daniels 19%
Low-Ki 15%
Shane Douglas 6%
A.J. Styles 6%
Others 13%

12. WHO IS THE MOST INFLUENTIAL WRESTLER ON THE INDEPENDENT SCENE?

Low-Ki 28%
Christopher Daniels 26%
A.J. Styles 21%
The Amazing Red 6%
Others 19%

13. WHAT ARE THE IMMEDIATE PROSPECTS FOR NWA-TNA?

Will survive the next year, but won't threaten WWE .. 45%
Will threaten WWE within the next two years 18%
Will fold within six months .. 37%

14. WHAT ARE THE CHANCES OF NWA-TNA SECURING A NATIONAL CABLE DEAL?

Unlikely 46%
Likely 42%
Excellent 8%
Virtually impossible 4%

15. WHAT HAS BEEN VINCE RUSSO'S OVERALL IMPACT IN NWA-TNA?

Slightly negative 29%
Slightly positive 26%
Catastrophic 25%
Highly favorable 14%
Negligible 6%

16. IS THE CLIMATE RIGHT FOR A THIRD MAJOR PLAYER IN NORTH AMERICA?

No 69%
Yes 31%

17. IS THERE A MARKET FOR JAPANESE PAY-PER-VIEWS IN NORTH AMERICA?

No 74%
Yes 26%

18. SHOULD THE WWE BRAND EXTENSION CONTINUE?

Yes 62%
No 38%

19. WILL BILL GOLDBERG RECLAIM SUPERSTAR STATUS IN THE U.S.?

Yes, but only as a short-term player 38%
No, because his heart isn't in the business 34%
Yes, he will become a regular main-eventer ... 15%
No, because the fans won't accept him 13%

20. WHO IS THE MOST UNDERRATED WRESTLER IN THE WORLD?

Jerry Lynn 22%

Matt Hardy 20%
Billy Kidman 14%
Chief Morley 9%
Ultimo Dragon 9%
Lance Storm 8%
Others 18%

21. WHO IS THE MOST OVERRATED WRESTLER IN THE WORLD?

Scott Steiner 29%
Triple-H 19%
The Big Show 17%
The Rock 9%
The Undertaker 6%
Ron Killings 6%
Others 14%

22. WHO IS WRESTLING'S BEST BRAWLER?

Steve Austin 28%
The Undertaker 18%
Brock Lesnar 16%
Triple-H 13%
Hulk Hogan 7%
Kane 7%
Others 11%

23. WHO GIVES THE BEST INTERVIEWS?

Ric Flair 23%
The Rock 19%
Vince McMahon 17%
Kurt Angle 16%
Paul Heyman 9%
Others 16%

24. WILL TRIPLE-H AND STEPHANIE McMAHON GET MARRIED?

Yes 72%
No 28%

25. WHO IS THE MOST DANGEROUS WRESTLER?

Brock Lesnar 38%
Scott Steiner 20%
The Undertaker 11%
Triple-H 9%
Steve Austin 7%
Others 15%

26. WHO IS WWE'S MOST PROMISING YOUNG STAR?

Randy Orton 23%
Charlie Haas 20%
John Cena 17%
Batista 15%
Shelton Benjamin 14%
Brian Kendrick 6%
Others 5%

27. WHO WAS THE WWE MVP OF 2002?

Kurt Angle 19%
Brock Lesnar 17%
Chris Benoit 16%
Edge 16%
The Undertaker 14%
Triple-H 8%
Others 10%

28. AT PRESS TIME, WWE STOCK WAS SELLING AT \$8.12 PER SHARE. WHERE DO YOU SEE WWE STOCK A YEAR FROM NOW?

About the same 58%
Half what it is now 18%
Double 16%
Less than half 7%
Triple 1%

29. AT PRESS TIME, RAW AND SMACK-DOWN WERE AVERAGING NIELSEN RATINGS OF 3.8 AND 3.4, RESPECTIVELY. WHERE DO YOU SEE THOSE RATINGS A YEAR FROM NOW?

- About the same41%
- One point higher35%
- One point lower20%
- Two or more points higher...4%

30. WILL THE ROCK BECOME A MAJOR HOLLYWOOD STAR?

- Yes72%
- No28%

31. SHOULD ERIC BISCHOFF BE GIVEN MORE POLITICAL POWER?

- Yes57%
- No43%

32. WHO DO YOU THINK WILL BE NUMBER ONE IN THE 2003 "PW/500"?

- Brock Lesnar29%
- Kurt Angle24%
- Chris Benoit21%
- Triple-H10%
- Booker T7%
- Others9%

33. WHO WILL BE THE FIRST "TOUGH ENOUGH-ER" TO WIN A MAJOR TITLE?

- Christopher Nowinski27%
- Maven21%
- Linda Miles17%
- Matt Cappotelli15%
- John Hennigan11%
- Matt Morgan8%
- Others1%

34. WAS IT A MISTAKE TO ELIMINATE THE INTERCONTINENTAL TITLE?

- Yes71%
- No9%

35. WHICH WAS THE BEST WWE PAY-PER-VIEW OF 2002?

- SummerSlam36%
- WrestleMania X833%
- Survivor Series11%
- Royal Rumble7%
- Others13%

36. WHO WAS THE NWA-TNA MVP FOR 2002?

- Jeff Jarrett26%
- A.J. Styles22%
- Jerry Lynn19%
- Ron Killings14%
- Vince Russo10%
- Others9%

37. BESIDES WRESTLING, WHAT SPORT DO YOU FOLLOW MOST CLOSELY?

- Football16%
- Baseball14%
- Auto racing14%
- Hockey14%
- Mixed martial arts13%
- Basketball12%
- Boxing9%
- Golf6%
- Others2%

38. WHO IS THE BEST MEXICAN WRESTLER?

- Shocker26%
- Black Tiger24%
- Dr. Wagner Jr.15%
- El Hijo del Santo12%
- Hector Garza7%
- La Parka6%
- Others10%

39. WHO IS THE BEST JAPANESE WRESTLER?

- Keiji Muto22%
- Yuji Nagata17%
- Tajiri15%
- Masa Chono12%
- Mitsuharu Misawa10%
- Jushin Liger8%
- Genichiro Tenryu7%
- Others9%

40. WHICH IS THE HIGHEST-IMPACT MANEUVER?

- Brock Lesnar's F530%
- The Dudley Boyz' 3D14%
- Victoria's widow's peak12%
- Test's high kick of death11%
- Jushin Liger's avalanche brainbuster9%
- Jerry Lynn's cradle piledriver7%
- Edge's spear6%
- Others11%

41. WHICH IS THE RISKIEST MANEUVER?

- Dragon Kid's Dragonrana27%
- Amazing Red's Red star press20%
- Tenacious Z's Asai moonsault15%
- The Great Sasuke's Sasuke special II12%
- Jodie Fleisch's 720 DDT10%
- Others16%

42. WHICH IS THE MOST EFFECTIVE SUBMISSION HOLD?

- Chris Benoit's Crippler crossface23%
- Kurt Angle's anklelock22%
- El Hijo del Santo's camel clutch13%
- Yuji Nagata's Nagata lock II10%
- Chris Jericho's Walls of Jericho9%
- Others23%

43. WHICH IS THE BEST OFFENSIVE STRIKE?

- Keiji Muto's shining wizard knee strike19%
- Chris Benoit's chops17%
- Tajiri's kicks14%
- Rob Van Dam's kicks12%
- Rey Mysterio Jr.'s 61911%
- Jushin Liger's palm strike10%
- The Hurricane's shining enzuigiri6%
- Others11%

44. WHICH IS THE BEST POWER BOMB VARIATION?

- Batista's demon bomb21%
- Dudleys' super bomb20%
- Satoshi Kojima's Rydeen bomb16%
- Undertaker's last ride14%
- Mike Awesome's Awesome bomb11%
- Jushin Liger's running Liger bomb10%
- Others8%

45. WHICH IS THE BEST ACE CRUSH-ER VARIATION?

- Steve Austin's Stone-Cold stunner24%

- Masato Tanaka's diamond dust18%
- Matt Hardy's twist of fate17%
- Super Delfin's Osaka cutter14%
- Spike Dudley's Dudley dog12%
- Gran Hamada's Hama-chan cutter6%
- Others9%

46. WHICH IS THE BEST SUPLEX VARIATION?

- Chris Benoit's rolling German suplex25%
- Kurt Angle's release German suplex24%
- Shinjiro Ohtani's German suplex16%
- Scott Steiner's belly-to-belly suplex13%
- Manami Toyota's ocean cyclone suplex12%
- Others10%

47. WHICH IS THE BEST PILEDRIVER VARIATION?

- Jerry Lynn's cradle piledriver27%
- Chris Hamrick's top-rope piledriver19%
- Genki Horiguchi's beachbreaker12%
- The Undertaker's tombstone piledriver11%
- Taka Michinoku's Michinoku driver10%
- Hiroyoshi Tenzan's tombstone driver10%
- Others11%

48. WHICH IS THE BEST TOP-ROPE MANEUVER?

- Rob Van Dam's five-star frog splash20%
- Rey Mysterio Jr.'s West Coast pop18%
- Eddie Guerrero's frog splash17%
- Dragon Kid's Dragonrana16%
- Jimmy Yang's Yang time10%
- Paul London's shooting star press7%
- Others12%

49. WHICH MOVE IS THE MOST PASSE?

- Superkick23%
- Moonsault21%
- Bearhug13%
- Legdrop11%
- Sleeperhold9%
- Others23%

50. WHO POSSESSES THE MOST EFFECTIVE FINISHER?

- Brock Lesnar (F5)17%
- Chris Benoit (Crippler crossface)15%
- Steve Austin (Stone-Cold stunner)14%
- Keiji Muto (shining wizard)10%
- Dudleys (3D)10%
- Kurt Angle (anklelock)9%
- Triple-H (pedigree)8%
- Black Tiger (triple-moonsault)7%
- Others10%

The 2004 PWI Poll

1. WHO IS, POUND-FOR-POUND, THE BEST WRESTLER IN THE WORLD?

Chris Benoit	.23%
Kurt Angle	.16%
A.J. Styles	.14%
Eddie Guerrero	.12%
Rey Mysterio Jr.	.9%
Jerry Lynn	.7%
Chris Sabin	.4%
The Amazing Red	.2%
Others	.13%

2. IF YOU COULD WATCH THE MATCHES OF ONLY ONE WRESTLER, WHOM WOULD YOU CHOOSE?

Kurt Angle	.24%
Chris Jericho	.18%
Eddie Guerrero	.16%
A.J. Styles	.11%
Chris Benoit	.7%
Rob Van Dam	.4%
Others	.20%

3. WOULD YOU JUDGE WRESTLING'S IMMEDIATE FUTURE AS HOPELESS, CLOUDY, STATUS QUO, PROMISING, OR SHINING?

Status quo	.32%
Cloudy	.30%
Promising	.21%
Shining	.10%
Hopeless	.7%

4. WHO IS WRESTLING'S SEXIEST WOMAN?

Stacy Keibler	.23%
Torrie Wilson	.18%
Jackie Gayda	.16%
Trish Stratus	.14%
Victoria	.10%
Trinity	.7%
Sable	.6%
Others	.6%

5. WHO IS WRESTLING'S SEXIEST MAN?

Randy Orton	.26%
Chris Jericho	.22%
Rob Van Dam	.18%
Rene Dupree	.10%
Matt Hardy	.5%
Billy Gunn	.5%
Spanky	.4%
Others	.10%

6. WHO IS WRESTLING'S BEST TV ANNOUNCER?

Jim Ross	.24%
Mike Tenay	.20%
Tazz	.16%
Michael Cole	.15%
Jerry Lawler	.8%
Jim Cornette	.7%
Don West	.3%
Others	.7%

7. WOULD YOU GAUGE THE GENERAL PUBLIC'S PERCEPTION OF WRESTLING AS POOR, MEDIOCRE, GOOD, OR EXCELLENT?

Poor	.33%
Mediocre	.29%
Good	.28%
Excellent	.10%

8. WOULD YOU DESCRIBE MAIN-STREAM COVERAGE OF WRESTLING AS POOR, MEDIOCRE, GOOD, OR EXCELLENT?

Mediocre	.31%
Good	.28%
Poor	.25%
Excellent	.16%

9. IF STEVE AUSTIN HAS ONE LAST MATCH IN HIM, WHOM SHOULD HE WRESTLE?

Bill Goldberg	.32%
Kurt Angle	.27%

Hulk Hogan	.25%
Brock Lesnar	.7%
Eddie Guerrero	.3%
Others	.6%

10. IS WRESTLING BETTER OR WORSE THAN IT WAS FIVE YEARS AGO?

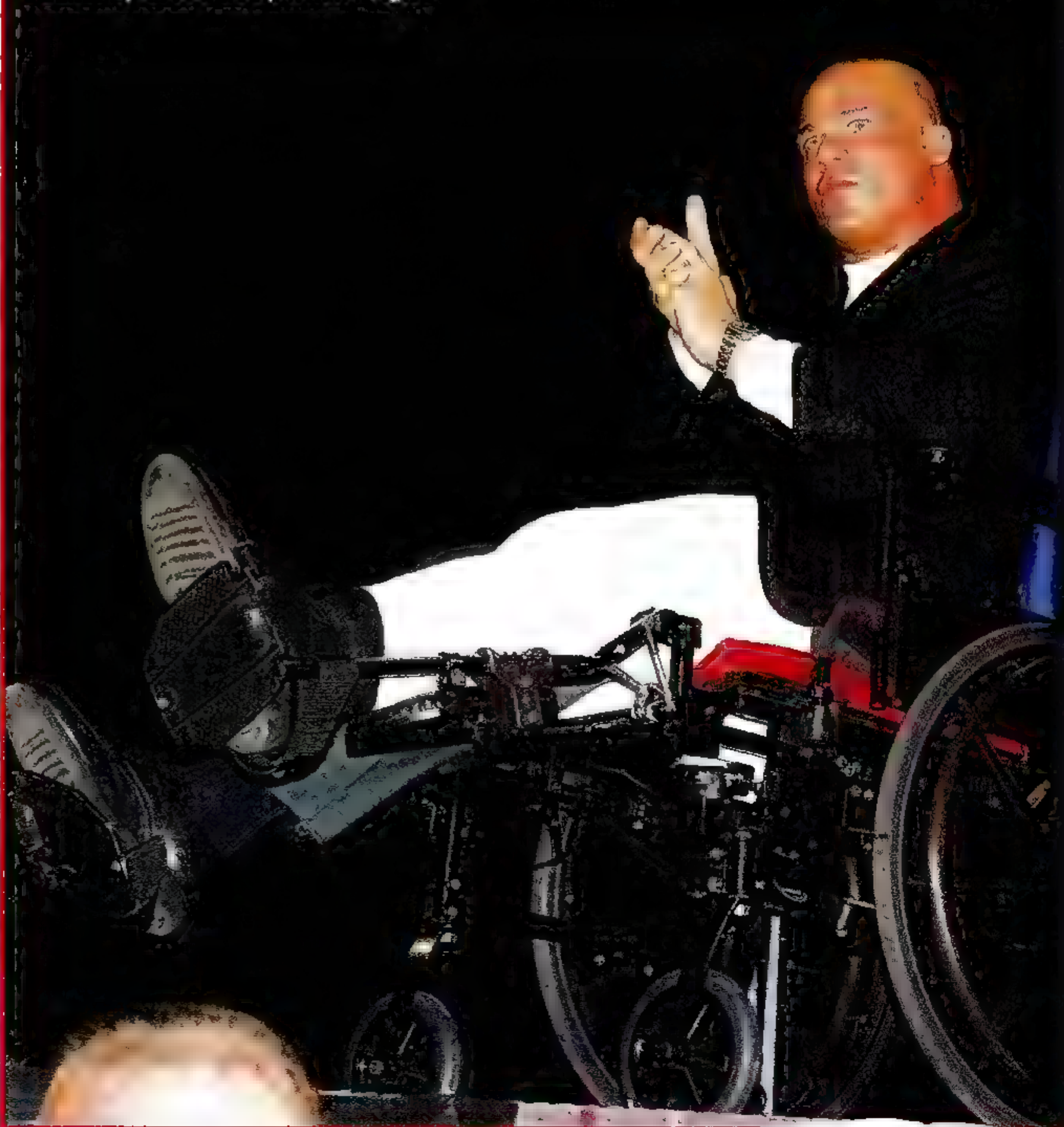
Worse	.65%
Better	.35%

11. VINCE McMAHON RECENTLY ISSUED A MANDATE TO SLOW DOWN WWE MATCHES TO REDUCE INJURIES AND TO MAKE HIGH SPOTS MORE MEANINGFUL. WILL THE NEW, SLOWER WWE STYLE STICK?

No	.58%
Yes	.42%

12. WHO WILL RETIRE FIRST, RIC FLAIR OR HULK HOGAN?

That body can't hold up much longer.



Hulk Hogan58%
Ric Flair42%

13. WHAT ARE THE IMMEDIATE PROSPECTS FOR NWA-TNA?

Will survive the next six months,
but won't threaten WWE ...74%
Will fold within six months ...26%

14. HOW MUCH LONGER DO YOU EXPECT KURT ANGLE TO BE ABLE TO WRESTLE?

Two to four years45%
Four to six years26%
Less than two years24%
Six or more years5%

15. WHO SUFFERED MOST THROUGH THE TNA-HOGAN DEBACLE?

NWA-TNA52%
Neither23%
Both20%
Hogan5%

16. CAN THE ROCK MAINTAIN HIS POPULARITY AMONG WRESTLING FANS WITH SUCH A LIMITED WRESTLING SCHEDULE?

Yes58%
No42%

17. CAN THE NEW HOT STARS (JOHN CENA, RANDY ORTON, BATISTA, A.J. STYLES, ET AL) LEAD WRESTLING TO ANOTHER BIG BOOM PERIOD?

No56%
Yes44%

18. HOW SUCCESSFUL WOULD YOU CONSIDER THE BRAND EXTENSION TO THIS POINT?

Moderately successful ...59%
Extremely successful19%
Not at all successful22%

19. WHAT IS GOLDBERG'S FUTURE IN WRESTLING?

Occasional Japan
appearances39%
WWE full-time again26%
WWE part-time24%
No future at all7%
NWA-TNA4%

20. WHO IS THE MOST UNDERRATED WRESTLER IN THE WORLD?

Lance Storm24%
The Big Show13%
Chavo Guerrero Jr.12%
Christian10%
Samoa Joe9%
Ultimo Dragon7%
Paul London6%
Hardcore Holly5%
A-Train3%
Others11%

21. WHO IS THE MOST OVERRATED WRESTLER IN THE WORLD?

Triple-H36%
Jeff Jarrett15%

Bill Goldberg13%
Batista8%
Shawn Michaels7%
Keiji Muto6%
Kane6%
The Dudley Boyz3%
Others6%

22. WHO IS WRESTLING'S BEST BRAWLER?

Samoa Joe21%
The Undertaker19%
Raven16%
Kane10%
Hardcore Holly7%
Toshiaki Kawada7%
Low-Ki5%
Abyss4%
Others11%

23. WHO GIVES THE BEST INTER-VIEWS?

John Cena20%
Ric Flair16%
Mick Foley14%
Triple-H12%
Eddie Guerrero11%
Kurt Angle11%
The Rock8%
Chris Jericho3%
Others5%

24. HOW LONG WILL THE TRIPLE-H-STEPHANIE MARRIAGE LAST?

'Til death do us part34%
Five to 10 years28%
Less than five years21%
10 to 20 years17%

25. WHO IS THE MOST DANGEROUS WRESTLER?

Kane23%
Batista18%
Triple-H15%
Brock Lesnar12%
Bill Goldberg11%
The Big Show6%
Abyss4%
The Undertaker3%
Sabu2%
Others6%

26. WHO IS THE MOST PROMISING WWE DEVELOPMENTAL STAR?

Johnny Jeter28%
Mark Magnus24%
Carly Colon19%
Alexis Laree10%
Nick Dinsmore6%
Chris Masters4%
Others9%

27. WHO WAS THE WWE MVP OF 2003?

Kurt Angle32%
Triple-H20%
Brock Lesnar16%
Eddie Guerrero11%
Chris Jericho7%
Bill Goldberg4%
Chris Benoit2%
Others8%

28. AT PRESS TIME, WWE STOCK WAS SELLING AT \$12.81 PER SHARE. WHERE DO YOU SEE WWE STOCK A YEAR FROM NOW?

About 50 percent more
than what it is now ...30%
About the same27%
Double16%
Half of what it is now ...17%
Less than half10%

29. AT PRESS TIME, RAW AND SMACKDOWN WERE AVERAGING NIELSEN RATINGS OF 3.8 AND 3.4, RESPECTIVELY. WHERE DO YOU SEE THOSE RATINGS A YEAR FROM NOW?

One point higher43%
About the same38%
Two or more points higher .10%
One point lower9%

30. AS A MINORITY OWNER OF NWA-TNA, IS JEFF JARRETT MAKING A MISTAKE BY INVOLVING HIMSELF TOO PROMINENTLY IN STORY-LINES?

Yes62%
No38%

31. SHOULD WWE SIGN BOB SAPP?

Yes62%
No38%

32. WHO DO YOU THINK WILL BE NUMBER ONE IN THE 2004 "PWI 500"?

Chris Benoit32%
Eddie Guerrero29%
Triple-H24%
Kurt Angle6%
A.J. Styles4%
Toshiaki Kawada3%
Others2%

33. RUMORS OF WWE STARTING A THIRD BRAND—POSSIBLY ECW—ABOUND. WOULD THIS BE A GOOD IDEA?

No67%
Yes33%

34. WHICH WAS THE BEST WWE PAY-PER-VIEW OF 2003?

Royal Rumble31%
WrestleMania XIX28%
Vengeance14%
Survivor Series11%
No Way Out6%
SummerSlam4%
Bad Blood2%
Others4%

35. WHO WAS THE NWA-TNA MVP FOR 2002?

Jeff Jarrett28%
A.J. Styles23%
Raven22%
Chris Sabin10%
Sting4%
Others13%

The 2005 PWI Poll

1. WHO IS, POUND-FOR-POUND, THE BEST WRESTLER IN THE WORLD?

Chris Benoit	19%
A.J. Styles	17%
Kenta Kobashi	13%
Rey Mysterio Jr.	12%
Eddie Guerrero	10%
Christopher Daniels	6%
Bryan Danielson	5%
Kurt Angle	4%
Petey Williams	2%
Others	12%

2. IF YOU COULD WATCH THE MATCHES OF ONLY ONE WRESTLER, WHOM WOULD YOU CHOOSE?

Chris Benoit	20%
Kurt Angle	16%
Triple-H	14%
A.J. Styles	12%
Chris Jericho	7%
Randy Orton	5%
Others	26%

3. WOULD YOU JUDGE WRESTLING'S IMMEDIATE FUTURE AS HOPELESS, CLOUDY, STATUS QUO, PROMISING, OR SHINING?

Status quo	39%
Promising	24%
Cloudy	23%
Shining	14%

4. WHO IS WRESTLING'S SEXIEST WOMAN?

Trish Stratus	30%
Torrie Wilson	20%
Stacy Keibler	17%
Alexis Laree	9%
Victoria	6%
Christy Hemme	4%
Jackie Gayda	3%
Tracy Brooks	3%
Others	8%

5. WHO IS WRESTLING'S SEXIEST MAN?

Randy Orton	28%
Chris Jericho	21%
Christopher Daniels	14%
Jeff Hardy	9%
Triple-H	8%
Frankie Kazarian	5%
Rene Dupree	3%
Others	12%

6. WHO IS WRESTLING'S BEST TV ANNOUNCER?

Mike Tenay	36%
Jim Ross	34%
Tazz	13%
Jim Cornette	9%
Michael Cole	5%
Jerry Lawler	3%

7. WOULD YOU GAUGE THE GENERAL PUBLIC'S PERCEPTION OF WRESTLING AS POOR, MEDIOCRE, GOOD, OR EXCELLENT?

Mediocre	38%
Good	28%
Poor	21%
Excellent	13%

8. WOULD YOU DESCRIBE MAINSTREAM COVERAGE OF WRESTLING AS POOR, MEDIOCRE, GOOD, OR EXCELLENT?

Poor	65%
Mediocre	15%
Good	12%
Excellent	8%

9. DID WWE MAKE A TACTICAL ERROR BY NOT NEGOTIATING A CONTRACT EXTENSION FOR THE ROCK?

Yes	72%
No	28%

10. IS WRESTLING BETTER OR WORSE THAN IT WAS FIVE YEARS AGO?

Worse	59%
Better	41%

11. GIVEN YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF STEVE AUSTIN'S CONDITION, WOULD YOU WRESTLE AGAIN?

Yes, but only in one or two big matches	48%
Definitely not	30%
Yes, on a semi-regular basis	22%

12. DID WWE MISREAD ITS FAN BASE WHEN IT OPTED TO RELEASE MANY OF ITS COMPETITIVE FEMALE STARS?

Yes	68%
No	32%

13. WILL TNA TURN A PROFIT IN 2005?

No	59%
Yes	41%

14. WHICH NETWORK WILL BROADCAST WWE AFTER ITS CONTRACT WITH VIACOM EXPIRES?

USA Network	39%
Viacom (Spike, UPN)	34%
WWE 24/7	8%
Syndication	5%
Other	14%

15. AFTER VINCE McMAHON RETIRES, WHO IS BEST QUALIFIED TO REPLACE HIM?

Shane McMahon	39%
A committee including all three candidates	24%

Stephanie McMahon	20%
Triple-H	14%
Someone outside the family	3%

16. WILL MULTIPLE DEVELOPMENTAL TERRITORIES PROVE FINANCIALLY FEASIBLE?

Yes	38%
No	32%
Unsure	30%

17. SHOULD WWE BRING BACK BROCK LESNAR?

Yes, but only if he commits to a full-time schedule	45%
No, his departure alienated fans and other WWE wrestlers, so he's not worth the trouble	30%
Yes, give him what he wants because his star power is needed	25%

18. WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING WILL BE THE BIGGEST STAR A YEAR FROM NOW?

Batista	44%
John Cena	37%
Randy Orton	19%

19. SHOULD WWE COMBINE ITS ROSTERS ON HOUSE SHOWS?

No	58%
Yes	42%

20. WHO IS THE MOST UNDERRATED WRESTLER IN THE WORLD?

Paul London	23%
Christian	19%
Samoa Joe	15%
Ultimo Dragon	12%
Akio	8%
Doug Basham	6%
Others	17%

21. WHO IS THE MOST OVERRATED WRESTLER IN THE WORLD?

Jeff Jarrett	30%
JBL	27%
Triple-H	22%
Randy Orton	9%
The Big Show	7%
Others	5%

22. WHO IS WRESTLING'S BEST BRAWLER?

Samoa Joe	23%
Raven	18%
Chris Benoit	16%
Batista	11%
Toshiaki Kawada	8%
Gene Snitsky	7%
Abyss	7%
Homicide	4%
Others	6%



Youngest—and sexiest—
World champion.

23. WHO IS THE MOST DANGEROUS WRESTLER?

Gene Snitsky	.21%
Kane	.18%
Heidenreich	.17%
Undertaker	.11%
Homicide	.9%
The Big Show	.8%
Blaster Lashley	.4%
Others	.12%

24. WHO GIVES THE BEST INTERVIEWS?

Mick Foley	.24%
Chris Jericho	.18%
C.M. Punk	.14%
John Cena	.12%
JBL	.10%
Eddie Guerrero	.6%
Others	.16%

25. WHO IS THE MOST PROMISING DEVELOPMENTAL STAR?

Elijah Burke	.22%
M-N-M (Joey Matthews, Johnny Nitro, and Melina)	.19%

Blaster Lashley	.16%
Johnny Jeter	.10%
Alexis Laree	.9%
Steve Lewington	.5%
Others	.19%

26. WILL THE ECW BRAND HAVE LEGS AFTER 2005?

No	.65%
Yes	.28%
Unsure	.7%

27. WHO WAS THE WWE MVP OF 2004?

Eddie Guerrero	.22%
Triple-H	.20%
Chris Benoit	.18%
Randy Orton	.17%
John Cena	.15%
Others	.8%

28. WHO WAS THE TNA MVP FOR 2004?

A.J. Styles	.30%
Jeff Jarrett	.27%
Dusty Rhodes	.20%

Jeff Hardy	.9%
Others	.14%

29. AT PRESS TIME, WWE STOCK WAS SELLING AT \$12.10 PER SHARE. WHERE DO YOU SEE WWE STOCK A YEAR FROM NOW?

About \$13 per share	.30%
About \$11 per share	.23%
Less than \$10 per share	.19%
About \$12 per share	.15%
More than \$13 per share	.13%

30. AT PRESS TIME, RAW AND SMACKDOWN WERE AVERAGING NIELSEN RATINGS OF 3.8 AND 3.6, RESPECTIVELY. WHERE DO YOU SEE THOSE RATINGS A YEAR FROM NOW?

Up by less than a point	.27%
Up by more than a point	.24%
About the same	.20%
Down by more than a point	.17%
Down by less than a point	.12%

31. SHOULD TNA PLACE MORE EMPHASIS ON ITS YOUNG TALENT OR ON ESTABLISHED NAMES?

Young talent	.76%
Established names	.24%

32. IF WWE COULD ADD ONE NAME TO ITS TALENT POOL, WHO SHOULD IT BE?

A.J. Styles	.27%
C.M. Punk	.18%
Jushin Liger	.15%
Bob Sapp	.14%
Sting	.9%
Christopher Daniels	.6%
Others	.11%

33. WHO DO YOU THINK WILL BE NUMBER ONE IN THE 2005 "PWI 500"?

Triple-H	.34%
Batista	.27%
John Bradshaw Layfield	.10%
Randy Orton	.10%
A.J. Styles	.7%
John Cena	.5%
Others	.7%

34. ASSUMING WRESTLING IS YOUR FAVORITE SPORT, WHAT'S NEXT?

Football	.35%
Boxing	.16%
Auto racing	.13%
Basketball	.13%
Baseball	.12%
Others	.11%

35. WHICH WAS THE BEST WWE PAY-PER-VIEW OF 2004?

WrestleMania XX	.42%
Backlash	.18%
Royal Rumble	.16%
SummerSlam	.12%
Survivor Series	.7%
Others	.5%



FEA

Bautista's

By Brady Hicks

IN THE RING, Batista has never had a problem overpowering his opponents. In the past two years alone, he has puzzled "The Game," jumped JBL, mauled Mark Henry, and kicked King Booker to the curb. And he's done it—in nearly every instance—with a resounding "Batista Bomb."

Even when he was forced by Smackdown General Manager Theodore Long to surrender his title due to a torn right triceps at the hands of Henry, "The Animal" used his time away from the sport to motivate himself to return and gain revenge. And as the fans in Philadelphia clamored to a fever pitch one night in July 2006, Batista stormed the ring and assaulted Henry with a steel chair in an onslaught that put Henry out of wrestling. Batista was back, and fans in the arena that night couldn't contain their excitement.

RR!

Invisible OPPONENT



Fast forward four extremely long months later to Survivor Series, also in Philly. After many weeks and many unsuccessful attempts to derail King Booker and reclaim the Smackdown World title, Batista lost his focus. In fact, even after ending the show with a "Batista Bomb" to win back his title, something was still missing. "The Animal" seemed reserved, almost restricted in his movements—almost as if he were holding back.

It is not yet known whether the damage most recently inflicted upon Batista was only physical. Perhaps the scars for the Smackdown World champion reside a bit deeper... possibly in his psyche.

"I think, psychologically, Batista's obviously not all there yet," said renowned wrestling psychiatrist Dr. Sidney M. Basil. "Physically, he's 100 percent healed, and it shows. But, mentally, he's probably still afraid of that next big bump that could lead to that next big injury. And if he's holding back like that in the ring, his risk of injury is actually higher."

Despite all of the dominant wins Batista has piled up over the years, he seems to be losing the biggest battle of all: the conflict inside his own mind. Before he steps through the ropes to do battle with one of Smackdown's finest, he must first convince himself to go all out—even at the risk of further injuries—just as he did when fighting his way through the ranks. In fact, a quick survey of the Smackdown locker room lends credence to what Dr. Basil asserts.

Many of Batista's peers were shocked that he was unable to regain the belt after opportunities at both SummerSlam and No Mercy. Even though one cannot say he is on a losing streak, he strikes many as passive. And passivity is not a characteristic that helped Batista become a main-eventer. Despite victory after victory in the ring, Batista has lacked the explosiveness with which he forged his reputation during his glory days on Raw and when he first signed with Smackdown.

"I compare it to a young football or hockey player who becomes gun-shy," continued Dr. Basil. "He might get hit once or twice really hard, and from that point on he flinches in every situation he might get slammed. While Batista is certainly not running away from physicality, he does seem to be shying away from the aggressiveness he has long been known for."

Looking back several years, Batista faced a similar situation when he debuted on Raw. Only months after starting with the company (on Smackdown), Batista suffered an undisclosed injury that sidelined him for the latter half of 2002. Upon his return, he opted for a fresh start by signing on as part of Raw and quickly forged backstage alliances with Triple-H and Ric Flair. These friendships were the genesis for what became known as Evolution.

"I can remember how legitimately pumped the big



Batista did well against then-Smackdown World champion King Booker whenever he was able to speed up the pace of the match (above). Too often, though, Batista allowed King Booker to control the pace, meaning that he often fell prey to the wily veteran's neutralizing holds (below). No wonder it took Batista four months to win the Smackdown World title.



Another flaw in Batista's strategy during his long title chase was his tendency to go for pin attempts too early. Because "The Animal" didn't blast King Booker with an overwhelming offense at the opening bell, he couldn't expect to end matches so soon.

man was after Triple-H's now-famous speech on Raw, the one where he proclaimed [Randy] Orton and Batista as "the future of wrestling," said Flair. "In the big man's eyes, he wanted the future then and there. He felt he was now running with the pack and that nothing would be able to hold him back."

Nothing, that is, except an unexpected right triceps tear only weeks later in a tag match with Evolution mate Orton—a triceps tear that sidelined Batista for several more months. "That look of pain on his face in that match said it all," said Orton, who also happened to break his foot in the match. "One second, he's taking on everybody like an idiot, all by himself. The next, he's grabbing his shoulder and crying like a baby. I guess

I should have known back then that Dave Batista isn't really cut out for this business."

While jogging during re-

habilitation, Batista re-aggravated his injury, setting his rehab back by several months. In all, it took Batista 10 months to return from his extensive injuries. And with each of these setbacks, Batista is a little slower and a little more careful.

"When he comes back from each injury, you'll notice he takes a little longer each time to get back into things," noted Dr. Basil. "The problem with Batista is that his power and his dominance are the source of about 98 percent of his pure ability in the ring. So when he feels like he has to protect himself physically, when he feels he can't go all-out, that's when he isn't able to



Big Dave has often been wrapped in bandages as a result of his passionate determination (left). But has Batista finally broken the hardest thing to fix—his intensity? Batista's supporters worry that his passion has given way to passivity (above).

BATISTA'S *Worry:* "GAME" OVER

Dr. Sidney M. Basil claims that Batista fears injuries and setbacks more than any bodyslam or steel chair inflicted upon his frame. Still, the Smackdown World champion takes pride in being the brand's focal point and its most dominant competitor. And even though he is now a wrestler on Smackdown instead of Raw, rest assured he watched New Year's Revolution. He is, after all, a student of "The Game."

Triple-H's recent quadriceps tear could have as much of a psychological effect on Batista as it had a physical effect on his former friend. Comparisons aside, Batista has had aspirations of being like Triple-H since he was trolling Ohio Valley Wrestling as Leviathan. Recently, Batista confided in a few Smackdown allies that he considers his WrestleMania 21 win over Triple-H to be the pinnacle of his career and his proudest moment as a competitor. It is said in the locker room that—despite their prior falling out—Batista has the utmost respect for his former Evolution leader, Triple-H, as a wrestler. Even his turn against "The Game" and subsequent Raw World title victory in 2005 were attempts to follow in Triple-H's footsteps.

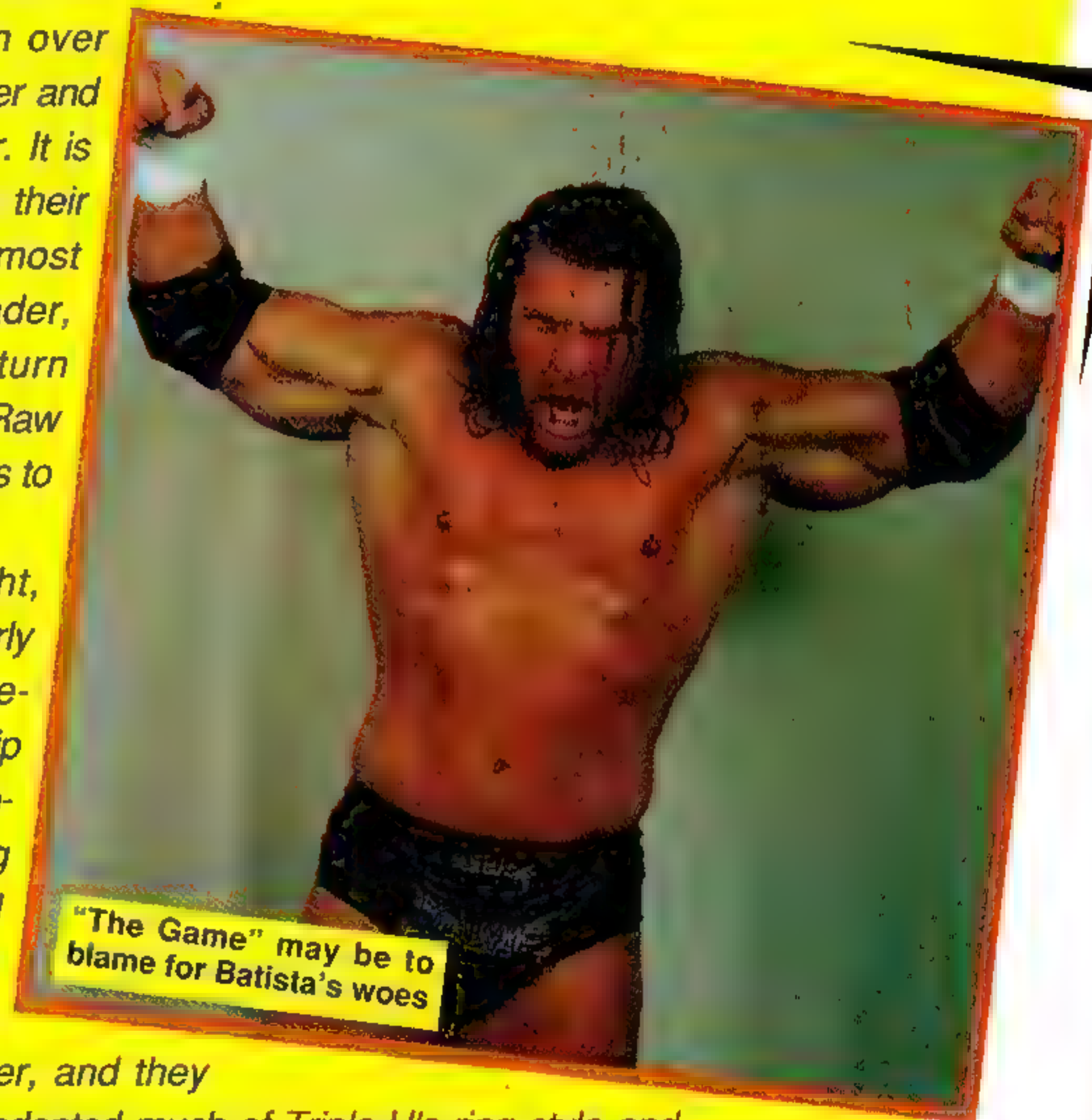
Although they are no longer tight, Batista has emulated Triple-H in nearly every aspect of his career: the three-piece suits, the belts, the championship lifestyle, the vast knowledge of the history of the sport. Batista has been trying to model himself after his former friend for years now. They have traveled together, and they have eaten together. They have weight-trained together, and they have competed together. Batista has adopted much of Triple-H's ring style and has put in long hours of dedicated work in the gym to maintain a comparable muscle mass.

Given Dr. Basil's theory that Batista has developed some sort of self-protective condition, one has to wonder if the injury to his former friend will make Batista even more reluctant in the ring. In other words, given the comparisons Batista sees between himself and his mentor, Batista has started to act even more passively in the ring than ever before.

Prior to joining Smackdown, Batista once angered many in the brand by commenting in an interview that some of his fellow wrestlers showed no heart. It has also been reported that Batista hoped—upon jumping programs—to be a leader and an inspiration for Smackdown, much like "The Game" had been for Batista and many of his Raw peers in years past. The one difference, however, is that Triple-H has never allowed a fear of injury to inhibit his in-ring performance. Many in the Smackdown locker room, however, believe Batista's mental hang-up will stifle his career and, as a result, hold back the entire brand.

As if fans of "The Animal" did not have enough to worry about.

—Brady Hicks



perform up to his ability."

Assuming Dr. Basil's assessment is true, is it a permanent situation? "Not necessarily," he responded. "I've seen it go both ways. Sometimes, something clicks inside an athlete's head and he is able to come to the realization that, even having sustained a serious injury in the past, he is no more likely to re-injure himself, or even sustain a new injury.

"In fact," he continued, "sometimes an injury is a blessing in disguise. It sends an urgent message to the athlete that he has to alter his training regimen, concentrate on things that he might not have even thought about before."

So where does this leave Batista? "I've never had the opportunity to talk with Batista about his personal trials," Basil said, "but from what I do know about him as a man, my guess is that he's going to be fine."

This is a fear that Batista must conquer. Otherwise, he will become an "Animal" tamed and a champion no more. □

"The Animal" has been acting more like a timid woodland creature than a beast of the wilderness. Dr. Basil suspects that he hesitates to give his all in the ring for fear that he could aggravate old injuries or create new ones.



Now that's the Batista that fans have come to know and admire. Hoisting Finlay up like a sack of potatoes, the big man prepares to drop the former U.S. champ with a running powerslam.

Is the pressure becoming too much for the mighty Batista? If Batista can stay healthy over the next several months, maybe he will regain the confidence to let loose again.

AMERICA'S MOST WANTED



A Special Analysis By Rick Steiner

WILL BE BACK!

"It's Okay To LOVE
Each Other And
HATE Each Other
At The Same Time"

I HAVE TO admit, it didn't come as much of a shock to me when I received the phone call last December from Scotty letting me know that America's Most Wanted was headed for a meltdown.

Despite my differences with Scotty at that time, we talked about



When troubles started brewing between TNA's most valuable tag team, Gail Kim tried to smooth things over. While America's Most Wanted ended up splitting, Rick Steiner thinks the two stars are fated to reunite.

Storm and Chris Harris struck so close to home. They had been so successful for so long, I'm sure they felt like brothers—just like us. All Scotty and I could do was laugh. So, when PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED asked me write an article expressing my opinion on whether or not America's Most Wanted was finished for good, I jumped at the chance to lay it out for the fans in a way that many folks just don't know.

See, I've been there at the top of the mountain, time and time again, and, on the other side of things, I've also seen the lowest of lows. I know for a fact that the world has not seen the end of America's Most Wanted for reasons that people who have never been a part of the wrestling business may not realize.

First off, wrestling is not only a very brutal sport, but it's an even nastier business. After cracking some skulls in the ring, the last thing a guy wants to deal with is not having someone in the locker room to kind of share your life with. Everybody's heard of "road wives" in the wrestling business. You share meals and hotel rooms with these guys, and gripe about the raw deal you're getting. You know, everyday stuff.

Whether you're winning or losing, it's good to have someone in your corner, both in the ring and in the room. One of the biggest benefits is having someone you trust watching your back at all times. But, as a team, the only way to stay happy with each other is to win matches and win belts.

That's something I think these guys in AMW were missing toward the end. Their focus became less on winning a championship and more on finding someone to blame for their losses. All great teams go through that, though. No one's saying you have to be buddies all the time—just when it counts the most. It's okay to love each other and hate each other at the same time.

Hell, look at how many times Scotty and I bumped heads since we went our separate

ways. Still, no matter how many times we beat each other up, I always knew in the back of my mind that we'd be fine at some point down the road. I don't care how often he dyes his facial hair, he'll always be the same little Scotty I played catch with back on our folks' lawn in Michigan. That's the beauty of tag teams. There's nothing a truly great team can't get past. If my brother and I can beat each other half to death and still get together for a beer and talk about the past—and maybe the future—anyone can.

This leads to my next point, which is that for a team to succeed in this sport, the two partners have to manage their pride. That single emotion can lift a team—and it can destroy a team. When you're on top, that pride of earning the gold will lift you to a place you never knew existed. Guys respect you just because you're you. Sure, they still hate you, but they respect you just the same.

Unfortunately, pride can go the other way, as it seems to have here with Storm and Harris. Both know how good they are and, based on his actions, it seems Storm has fallen into the trap of believing that he was bigger than the team. Let me tell you something, boy: That's never the case. You can hate your partner, but once you start believing you're better than him, it's all downhill from there.

I hope Storm and Harris are really paying attention to this part. It just makes good business sense for America's Most Wanted to return to form. What? You people didn't think the "Dog-Faced Gremlin" knew a thing or two about business?



Aspirations for singles success may have been the cause of the AMW divide. While both James Storm (left, against A.J. Styles) and Chris Harris (below, against Christopher Daniels) are talented wrestlers, Steiner reminds them that successful tag teams rarely find equal success in singles competition.



The fact is that guys who gain their greatest success as a member of a tag team rarely go on to huge singles careers (of course, with the exception of a guy like Scotty). If you want to keep your pockets lined with green and keep your job, you'll rethink whether it was a good idea to crack a beer bottle over your partner's head.

These guys are good, young wrestlers with tons of potential, so why did Storm mess that up? There are plenty of good wrestlers out there that have made great careers for themselves in tag team wrestling. Take Team 3D. Aside from The Steiner Brothers, they're the best tag team I've ever seen. When they went their separate ways earlier in their careers, it didn't work out. So, what did they do? They reunited and now look like they're as good as ever ... at least until Scotty and I get a shot at them, which I hope happens soon.

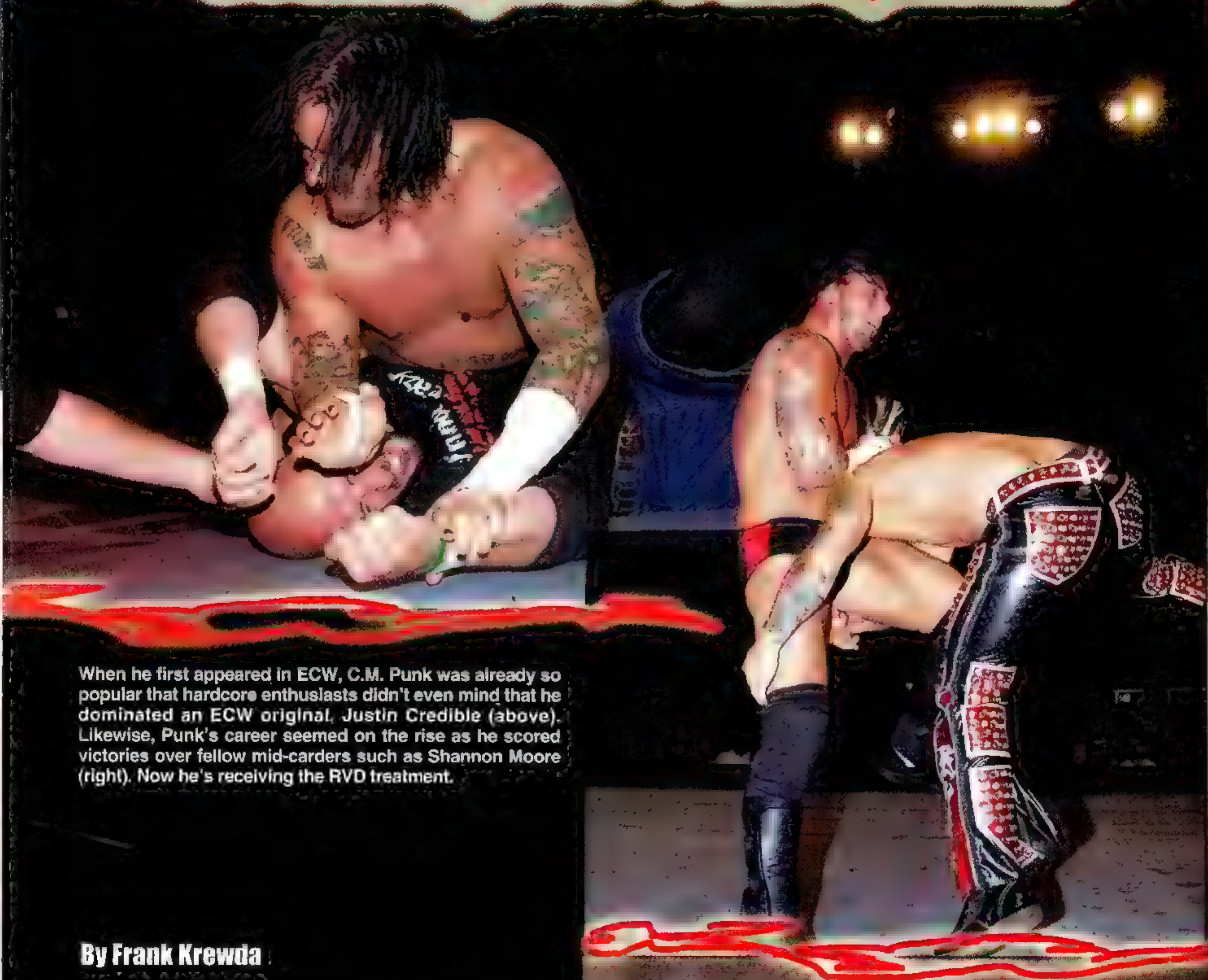
If wrestling's taught me anything, it's that nothing is definite. One minute I'm standing there holding the WCW World tag team title with my best friend, the next I'm getting knocked silly by a bleach blond "Freakzilla." Now, I wouldn't be surprised if Scotty and I gave it one more run for old time's sake. Blood is thicker than water and being tag team part-

ners is like being brothers. America's Most Wanted will realize this and they will be together again. And everyone in TNA ... well, almost everyone ... will be running scared. □

No matter how much they fight, Harris and Storm cannot ignore their past together. According to Rick Steiner, the bond of tag team partners is like the bond between brothers: You can love and hate your brother at the same time. Respecting each other is the key.



Another ECW Golden Boy Could Lose His Luster



When he first appeared in ECW, C.M. Punk was already so popular that hardcore enthusiasts didn't even mind that he dominated an ECW original, Justin Credible (above). Likewise, Punk's career seemed on the rise as he scored victories over fellow mid-carders such as Shannon Moore (right). Now he's receiving the RVD treatment.

By Frank Krewda

JUDGING BY THEIR personalities, C.M. Punk and Rob Van Dam are about as opposite as two people can be.

RVD is admittedly a Type B individual and projects a laid-back aura, despite his in-ring intensity. Van Dam has developed a kind of stoner image by incorporating his appreciation for that culture into his wrestling persona,

Photos by George Napolitano



IS WWE VAN DAMMING C.M. PUNK?

▲ MAY/2007 ▲ 97

despite criticism from watchdog types who'd like to see professional wrestling cleaned up. Punk, on the other hand, has been committed to the straight-edge lifestyle since the age of 15. That means no drugs, no alcohol, and no smoking. He wears his fastidious and squeaky-clean image on his sleeve, or more correctly, on his abdomen in the form of a "straightedge" tattoo.

Despite coming from such polar positions, the two men do, however, share common ground. Both Van Dam and Punk believe in their lifestyles, body and soul. Both have ridden their respective philosophies to success and fanfare. And, now that both are working for Vince McMahon, they both seem destined to hit the glass ceiling that limits all WWE's "imported" superstars.

In light of RVD's inability to remain among WWE's elite, as well as recent developments in Punk's career, fans have to wonder, is WWE "Van Damming" C.M. Punk?

Coming from ECW, where Van Dam achieved legendary status among fans, RVD must've envisioned big things for himself after signing with WWE in 2001. And for good reason. He'd proven himself to be a special wrestler, the exceptional breed that possesses an abundance of talent to go with an uncanny knack for connecting with fans. Even more remarkably, he'd done it all without even holding the ECW World heavyweight title.

Punk (right, against Edge) and RVD (below, against MVP) have proven their abilities against big-name talent and new stars. Why are two entertaining, capable, popular competitors receiving minimal face time and not competing for gold?



Unfortunately for Van Dam, success came slowly in WWE—and in small doses. He was given ample opportunity in mid-card matches. He was deemed worthy of a handful of minor title reigns. Loyal followers and WWE diehards that were getting their first taste of RVD's greatness clamored for more. But the only meaningful main-event match Van Dam would get was a random shot at Triple-H's Raw World title.

Despite giving Triple-H all he could handle ("The Game" needed interference from Ric Flair to retain the title), RVD's time in the main-event picture was a one-and-done deal. RVD wasn't even invited to perform at WrestleMania XX.

On June 12, 2004, Van Dam went public with his displeasure in a searing commentary delivered at the One Night Stand pay-per-view. RVD spoke and WWE responded with a moderate push. But Van Dam was never afforded another opportunity to

make a significant impact in the WWE's upper tier.

Now it appears as if Punk is on the same trajectory. Like RVD, he became revered for his technically proficient work on the independent wrestling scene. Fans of IWA Mid-South, Ring of Honor, and TNA were drawn to Punk's intensity, charisma, and skills. Like RVD, Punk amassed a cult following.

And like RVD, Punk has seen his share of ups and downs since signing with WWE—a situation that hardly befits a wrestler of his renown. After winning several titles in Ohio Valley Wrestling (a WWE developmental territory), Punk was introduced to fans on WWE's smallest possible stage: dark matches and the re-formed ECW, toiling against Justin Credible and Mike Knox.

That was until Survivor Series, where he teamed with DeGeneration X and The Hardys against Randy Orton, Edge, Gregory Helms, Johnny Nitro, and Knox. Despite the obvious star power of his teammates and opponents, Punk elicited a reaction from fans reminiscent of the pops Van Dam gets any time he enters the ring. Punk went on to choke out Nitro with an anaconda vice. It was all heady stuff that would leave even the most grounded superstar confident of further growth.

But any hope Punk held for a push were doused by his next assignment: a return to ECW, where he'd end up on the wrong side of a feud with Test—a wrestler who couldn't even remain on the Raw roster.

What factors could've led to such a disappointing set of circumstances for a wrestler who seemed poised for a spot in Raw's regular rotation? There are several.

First, like Van Dam, Punk isn't your prototypical WWE superstar. He lacks the size and presence Vince McMahon has long preferred for his champions and superstars. Except for Shawn

Michaels, Eddie Guerrero, and Chris Benoit, it has always appeared that smallish wrestlers have been destined for a certain elevation just short of the top floor.

Second, because of his size, Punk depends on a mat-based, martial-arts wrestling style. That's not consistent with McMahon's penchant for brawling, power-based action.

Third, like RVD, Punk is outspoken. He's not afraid to take a stand against behind-the-scenes injustices. He's married to his style and persona, and, from all appearances, unwilling to bend on the direction of his career.

Consider the January 30 edition of ECW's weekly program. On the same show, Matt Striker beat Punk, and Hardcore Holly cleanly pinned Van Dam. Meanwhile, in the main event, ECW champion Bobby Lashley defeated Test for the third time in eight days.

Why does WWE want to stunt the career growth of popular stars such as Punk and Van Dam? The most

likely scenario is the same dynamic that kept Bill Goldberg, Dallas Page, and Scott Steiner in check: WWE's petty fixation with knocking down imported stars.

Let's face it: All the wrestlers listed above earned their name while wrestling for another company. Obviously, building upon that success represents some sort of failure to Vince McMahon. In his world, incoming established stars must be broken down and re-cast in the mold Vince envisions for them. Until and unless these retooled superstars get over, they just keep bumping their heads on the glass ceiling.

If recent weeks are any indication, Punk will be "Van Dammed" to mid-card existence for quite some time. □



Thanks to WWE's dwindling push of Rob Van Dam, rumors have begun circulating that he is interested in signing with TNA when his contract expires this year. If he makes the move, will Punk do the same?

Bam Bam Big

1961-2007

"HE WAS A BIG MAN,
BUT, BOY COULD HE MOVE"

By Dan Murphy

PERHAPS THE ONLY thing sadder than the news of Scott "Bam Bam" Bigelow's passing was the general feeling that his reckless lifestyle and a long series of poor decisions sent him to an early grave. And that was the sentiment of those who knew him best and loved him most.

Jerry Sags of The Nasty Boys told the *New York Daily News*, "And I said, 'Man, we've lost 40 of our friends. I'm tired of going to funerals. Don't let it happen to you.'"

Bigelow announced his retirement from wrestling in 2002, though he occasionally accepted independent bookings over the next few years. In October 2005, he was involved in a serious motorcycle accident when he overturned his Harley-Davidson at a speed of between 80 and 90 miles per hour on wet pavement. Bigelow suffered severe cuts and a broken nose in the accident, and his girlfriend was nearly killed. At the time of his death, Bigelow was facing charges of driving under the influence with serious bodily injury, driving under the influence, driving without a motorcycle license, and driving with a suspended driver's license.

Bigelow had always lived on the edge, dating back to 1985, when he arrived at Larry Sharpe's Monster Factory, looking to become a professional wrestler.

"Two mob guys brought him in," Sharpe said when contacted after Bigelow's death. "He was a bouncer at the Stone Pony in Jersey. He had been an excellent amateur wrestler; at one time he had been second in the state. He had size, a full head of hair, a pair of sneakers, cut-off shorts, and a flannel shirt. That was all he had at the time. These mob-

elow





"Pretty Boy" Larry Sharpe introduced Bam Bam Bigelow to the wrestling world in 1985. Sharpe trained Bigelow for the squared circle and served as his manager during the big man's formative years.

sters wanted to see what I thought of him. They left me 500 bucks to take care of him over the weekend and tell them what I thought.

"In those two days I worked with him, I saw that he probably had more ability than anybody I had ever worked with," added Sharpe.

Sharpe was immediately struck by Bigelow's uncanny agility for a 325-pound man. He asked Bigelow to do a cartwheel and Bigelow did it. He asked Bigelow to do a headstand, then a one-handed headstand. Bigelow did both effortlessly. But, despite Sharpe's glowing reviews, Bigelow's would-be financiers decided against investing in pro wrestling, where a wrestler's success or lack thereof isn't necessarily related to pure talent and skill.

Sharpe offered to train Bigelow himself. He put Bigelow up at his home, fed him, and provided him with transportation under an agreement that 50 percent of Bigelow's future earnings would go to Sharpe until his debt was paid off.

"It was expensive—he ate like a horse and drank like a fish," Sharpe said. "It wasn't all business, though. We became good friends."

Sharpe suggested Bigelow shave his head and get his trademark fireball tattoo. "He had a little sunburst on his temple. I thought he should shave the whole thing and get it tattooed to look like the hood of a '49 hot rod," Sharpe said.



Bigelow's tattooed dome caught the eye of a *Sports Illustrated* reporter who was doing a feature on Sharpe's Monster Factory. "Bigelow wasn't always the most honest person," Sharpe said. "He told this reporter that he also had the word 'Nuclear' tattooed on one foot and 'Splash' tattooed on the other, because his finisher was the nuclear splash off the top rope. He never had those tattoos. Well, the photographer comes and takes a bunch of pictures, and, a couple of days later, the reporter calls and says he really wants a shot of the tattoos on his feet. So he went out and found a guy in Asbury Park and he got those tattoos right on the bottom of his feet. They were the most painful tattoos on his body because it's so tender. The photog-

rapher took the pictures of his feet, and that picture never ran in the magazine."

With his unique look and natural athleticism—and especially after the piece in *SI*—Bigelow quickly drew attention.



One shove instigated Bigelow's feud with NFL All-Pro Lawrence Taylor in 1995, and Bigelow starts his WrestleMania XI match against Taylor in the same manner. As a result of that match, Bigelow became a household name ... at least for a brief while.



"The Beast From The East" became cool again in ECW, due in part to his TV title victory over Taz in 1998. Bigelow sent Taz to the mat with such force that the ring collapsed. Bigelow drags Taz out of the hole to score the winning pinfall.

His perfect dropkicks and moves off the top rope were groundbreaking. He competed in Memphis and had a main-event feud against Jerry Lawler in 1986. He briefly competed in Texas under the name "Crusher Yurkof" before Sharpe landed him a tour of Japan. Bigelow became an instant sensation in Japan in 1987, beating New Japan megastar Akira Maeda. Hulk Hogan had been the only American to beat Maeda to that point.

Sharpe and Bigelow had a major falling-out at the end of that tour, one that would be battled in court over the next seven years. The two didn't speak for years until Sharpe was diagnosed with leukemia in 1998. "Scott called, and we talked for two or three minutes," recalled Sharpe. "We said how we should really get together for a couple of beers. It just never happened. I never talked to him again."

Bigelow moved on to the WWF in 1987 and was groomed to be Hulk Hogan's tag team partner. Bigelow struggled with sudden fame and money and left the WWF in 1988 for another tour of Japan, where he teamed with Big Van Vader. He competed briefly in the NWA and returned to the WWF in 1993.

In 1995, Bigelow headlined

WrestleMania XI, wrestling against NFL great Lawrence Taylor. The match earned widespread mainstream coverage, and Bigelow was critically lauded for carrying the inexperienced Taylor to a good match. Taylor won the bout and plans were made for Bigelow and Taylor to team together at SummerSlam that year. However, Taylor backed out of the plan, and Bigelow's career stagnated in the WWF.

In 1997, Bigelow got a new lease on life in ECW, and went on to win that promotion's heavyweight and TV titles. He had another run in WCW in the late-1990s, winning the World tag team and hardcore titles.

By the early-2000s, Bigelow had fallen on hard times and was plagued by battles with drugs, alcohol, and the law. He was found dead in his girlfriend's apartment on January 19 at the age of 45. A cause of death had not been determined at press time.


"Bam Bam will go down as a character that made a

Bigelow's final major run occurred in WCW, where he arrived as a surprise opponent for then-World champion Bill Goldberg in 1998. Despite Bigelow's brawling ability, Goldberg always found a way to overpower and defeat the New Jersey native.

decent living," said Sharpe, "but because of his personal lifestyle, never fulfilled the potential that he could have. He was a big man, but, boy, could he move." □



Although Bigelow developed a rugged reputation in and out of the ring, he always had a soft spot for kids. Here, "The Beast" signs autographs for two disabled youngsters at a WCW event.



HE BEAT THE MAN, BUT CAN HE BE THE MAN?

**Kenny's Stealing More Than
Victories From The "Nature Boy"**

By Dave Lenker

CAN YOU REALLY be The Man if you beat The Man but The Man isn't really The Man anymore and really hasn't been The Man since long before you were a man yourself?

Confused?

Kenny Dykstra is right there with you, but it isn't because he's trying to figure out our silly riddle. He's trying to figure out why a



Photos by George Napolitano

series of victories over the most prolific world champion in the history of professional wrestling has done so very little to advance his career. Remember the cocky 20-year-old, whom many think has a world title or two in his future, uttering on Raw recently that 2007 was going to be *his* year?

It wasn't exactly up there with Gen. Douglas MacArthur famously pronouncing, "I shall return" during World War II. In 1942, MacArthur was ordered to leave the Philippines as invading Japanese forces tightened their grip on that island nation, but he knew he'd be back to help finish the job for the Allies. He was and they did. A legend was born. It's become one of the most memorable quotes in U.S. history.

Dykstra's slightly less fearless forecast was met with more of a "Yeah, okay, whatever, kid" type of reaction. It was forgotten by the time the next quarter-hour was over. It doesn't look like 2007 is his for the taking. Now there isn't necessarily anything wrong with boasting, as in this case. Kenny wants to back up his big mouth. It's the execution that's lacking so far.

"Ric Flair, maybe the greatest champion ever, gets pinned by me, the new phenom of WWE, Kenny Dykstra, not once, but over and over again," Dykstra said when asked to describe the significance of his success against Flair. "I wasn't even born yet when Flair won his first world championship. I'm not sure my parents were even born. That's how huge my victories over him are. Only a 20-year-old as good as me could pull off something like that."

Dykstra exaggerates—big surprise—but it's true that he wasn't yet born when Flair defeated Dusty Rhodes for the NWA World heavyweight title on September 17, 1981, the first of 16 world championship wins. (We're quite certain his parents were.) But he inadvertently makes a very salient point, just not the point he intended to get across. Flair is almost four full decades older than Dykstra. Beating a man so much older than you

After numerous tag team losses to veterans Ric Flair and Roddy Piper (below), the most promising member of the cheerleading quartet finally broke free to seek revenge on "Naitch" (bottom).



can't be all that significant.

It's worth pointing out that Dykstra was only 13 when Flair won his *last* world title, the WCW championship, in 2000. Even then, with the big gold belt strapped around his waist, Flair wasn't really The Man. People still may have called him that then, and they may still call him that now, but it was and is mostly out of respect for such a magnificent career, not so much his standing at the time.

So WWE should be forgiven for not throwing Dykstra a party for pinning Flair. It wasn't even meaningful enough to warrant someone sending a bottle of champagne to Kenny's hotel room. He couldn't legally drink it anyway, even if someone had done that.

But...

It's still a noteworthy accomplishment. A lot of 20-year-old wrestlers would freeze up if they were put in the ring one-on-one with Flair, even a 58-year-old Flair. Dykstra never showed a hint of intimidation. He seemed to have Flair fairly well-scouted from the first collar-and-elbow tie-up. Even



Despite his persistence and longevity in WWE, Ric Flair is not 'The Man' he once was (below), though he can still put up quite a fight against the brightest rising stars in the company, including Dykstra (above).



BUDDY LANDELL:

"I Learned My Lesson 20 Years Ago"

If you're not big on wrestling history, you might not realize that there was a time when Ric Flair wasn't considered worthy of the "Nature Boy" moniker. Some felt that to be true, anyway. The only true "Nature Boy" was the original, former NWA and WWF World champion Buddy Rogers.

Suffice to say, Flair shut up those doubters long ago. He might have stolen a bit from Rogers, but he has made the name his own.

In the mid-1980s, a young upstart named Buddy Landell tried to make the name *his* at Flair's expense. It didn't happen. Didn't even come close.

Oddly enough, it was J.J. Dillon, who would later gain his greatest fame as manager of the Flair-led Four Horsemen, who brought Landell to Jim Crockett Promotions in 1985 to try to wrest the NWA World title from the "Nature Boy."

Landell, with his flowing blond locks, knew immediately how he'd target then-fan favorite Flair. He called himself the *real* "Nature Boy," adding that he was "10 years younger and 10 years better" than the champ. (Isn't it odd to think that Flair's age was made an issue 22 years ago?) He added a figure-four leglock, flying elbowsmash, and a few other Flair staples to his repertoire. The approach worked great—against most of the mid-carders he faced



Then he ran into Flair and lost convincingly. The feud probably had some juice left in it, and some thought Landell had an NWA World title in his future, but he abruptly left Jim Crockett Promotions.

Two decades-plus later, we tracked down Landell and asked him to revisit the feud.

"I gave Flair some of his toughest matches—I truly believe that," he told us, "but you can't beat the guy at his own game. Don't even try. Maybe a little different approach would have worked out better for me. You just don't realize how smart Flair is in the ring until you're in there with him. He got me

and I see he's still holding his own in WWE. That Kenny kid thinks he's getting one over on Flair, but that ain't the way to take it to Slick Ric.

"I learned my lesson 20 years ago. Kenny's liable to learn his, too. I don't care how old Flair is."

Landell won the National title from Terry Taylor in 1985 and has a long list of other regional championships on his resume. You might remember his brief stop in the WWF a decade ago. But as for him calling himself the "Nature Boy," it never clicked. He was no Flair. Kenny Dykstra may want to give him a call.

—Dave Lenker

at an advanced wrestling age, Flair is known to think at least a move or two ahead. Kenny is usually right there with him in that respect.

He is unlikely to admit it, but he must watch a lot of Flair on tape.

Maybe too much.

Despite his proclamation about 2007 being his year, which we would assume means he intends to win a few titles and climb at least a few rungs on that tall, crowded Raw ladder of contention, he seems far too focused on just getting the best of

Flair, outsmarting him, maybe even humiliating him a little. You just know he was strutting around backstage after eliminating Flair from the Royal Rumble. Too bad for him he really wasn't much of a factor in the bout. He didn't follow through on his promise to win it. In fact, he probably had time to shower and get dressed and still catch the thrilling finish that saw The Undertaker knock Shawn Michaels over the top rope to punch a ticket to the main event of WrestleMania 23.

Only one month earlier, with Kenny still trying to

wash the Spirit Squad stink off himself and having just added a surname, he and Flair met one-on-one. Dykstra scored a cheap win with a roll-up, but was he satisfied? Did he at least try to parlay that victory on Raw into something bigger?

No, he did not. Two weeks later, on New Year's night, Dykstra pinned Flair again in a tag team bout also featuring Carlito and Chris Masters, but he did so with his feet on the ropes. Vintage Flair. Six nights later, at New Year's Revolution, he pinned Flair again, this time after drilling "Naitch" with a low blow. Vintage Flair, part II. Flair got revenge via proxy the next night on Raw, as his low blow led to Carlito pinning Dykstra. Exactly one week after that, Flair pinned Dykstra on Raw with his own feet on the ropes, this time after Dykstra used a figure-four (yes, more vintage Flair) and after Dykstra got caught using the ropes during a pinfall attempt (vintage Flair, part II again).

What a mess. Everyone knows Flair isn't going to get many clean wins at this point in his career. He is 58, after all. He has cleverly woven that weakness into his persona, essentially letting all of us know that he *wants* to win dirty, thrives on winning dirty. Low blows, feet on the ropes, maybe an occasional eye gouge. Flair has earned the right to compete his way. He has nothing more to prove to Kenny Dykstra, Lenny Dykstra, Mookie Wilson, Al Wilson, or anyone else.

Although Kenny was probably the most talented member of the now-defunct Spirit Squad, he still has a lot to prove.

A perfectly clean win over Flair may turn a head or two. Wouldn't you be impressed if Kenny went right after Flair in a match, used his superior speed, power, and athleticism, maybe broke out a few new moves, and then made him tap out to a submission hold Flair had never seen him use before? No trash-talking, no histrionics, no stealing moves, and no, dare we say, raping Flair of his dignity. Just a quick, clean, decisive win. Flair could be the one taken to school for a change. Dykstra is certainly capable of that ... probably ... maybe ... possibly.

"Wow, 'King,' it looks like Kenny is getting serious," Jim Ross would quip.

The point is that he has to try. He has to show us something special. Beating Flair cleanly and quickly would be a fine start. Heck, we'd even take a tainted win that didn't involve Kenny borrowing one of Flair's favorite underhanded tactics. Flair seethes every time Dykstra out-cheats him—and steals directly from him—and Dykstra revels in that. He has taken Flair's greatest weapons and used them against him. Unfortunately, in the big picture, Kenny isn't accomplishing nearly as much as he thinks. He has beaten The Man, but that doesn't make him The Man.



The "Nature Boy" is well-known for his rulebreaking ways and trademark moves, such as his vicious chops (above). But now Dykstra is fresh from his Spirit Squad split and showing Flair what he has learned from years of watching the legend at work (below).



the business page

By Frank Ingiosi

Characters, and the ad dollars they bring, most definitely welcome —

The USA Network, a subsidiary of NBC Universal, issued a press release touting its status as the top U.S. basic cable network, based on 2006 ratings. According to the report, USA averaged 2 million households on a nightly basis, and 2.6 million total viewers in the same

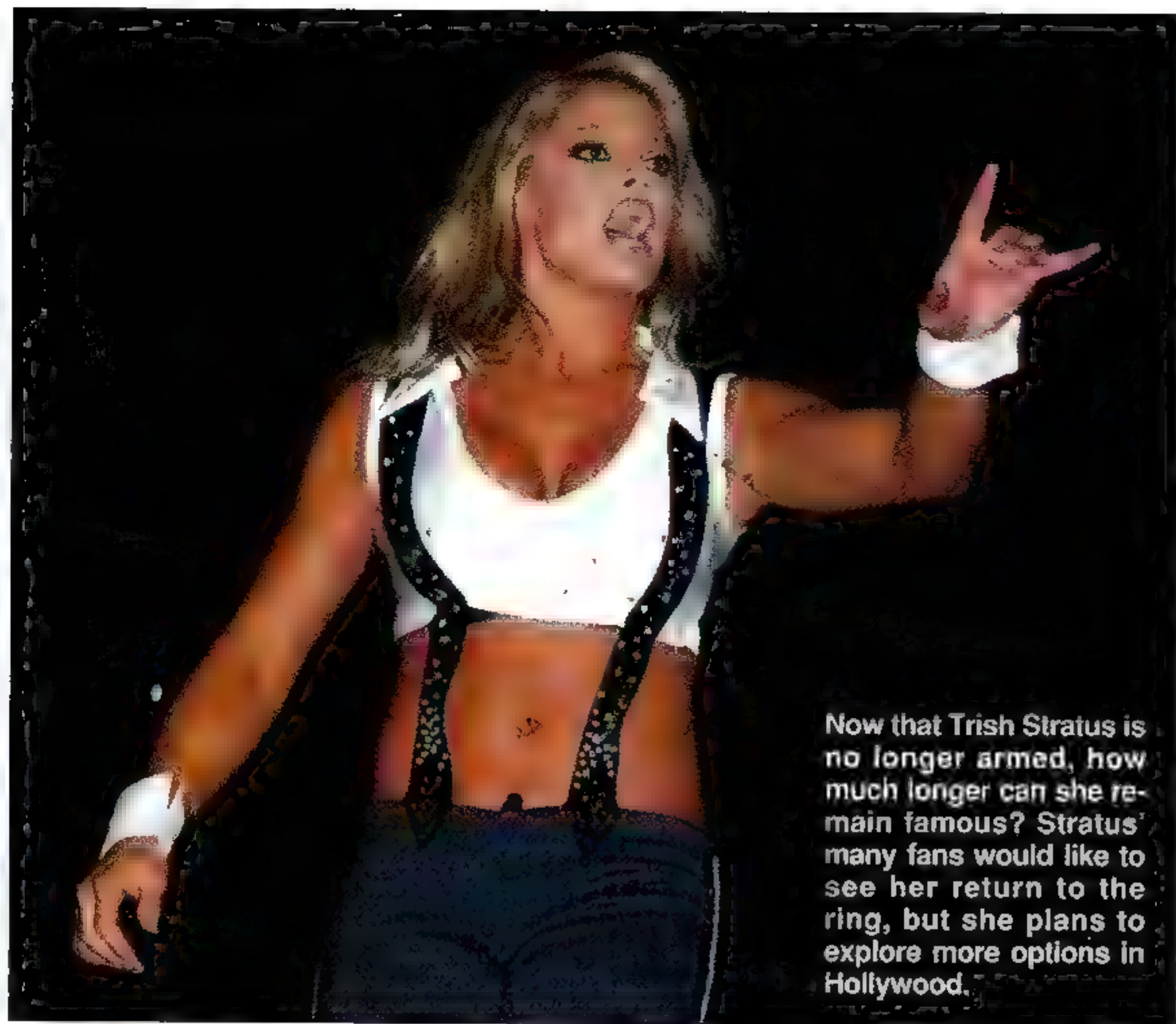
time frame. The release further broke down the information by demographic group with the much-coveted 25- to 54-year-old contingent making up the substantial majority of the network's viewing audience.

With an average weekly viewership of 2.6 million in the 18 to 49 age group, and 2.4 million in 25 to 54 age group, Raw was the runaway leader of the network's programming schedule, helping the USA Network to crown itself the "number-one entertainment network on Monday nights in 2006."

More good news came for Raw's parent network with the announcement that it was in negotiations with Shaw Communications, a Canadian cable television provider, to become part of its subscription package, making USA available to our neighbors in the north. If negotiations are successful, WWE and USA will face an interesting dilemma: Raw



Characters such as Carlito and Kenny Dykstra are always welcome at the USA Network, as long as Raw's ratings stay high. Raw's hard-hitting action has helped USA become the top network in all of cable.



Now that Trish Stratus is no longer armed, how much longer can she remain famous? Stratus' many fans would like to see her return to the ring, but she plans to explore more options in Hollywood.

already airs on Canada's Score Television Network, and it is unclear whether WWE would want to—or could—pull Raw from The Score.

Insert “going to the dogs” joke here ... Seeking to capitalize on the annual disturbance in WWE programming brought on by the USA Network's coverage of the Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show, TNA jumped at the opportunity to seize the Monday night viewing market by airing a two-hour special entitled *This Is TNA!*

The broadcast was slated to consist of an hour's worth of the top five pay-per-view matches in the promotion's four-year history, focusing on the many—oftentimes criticized—gimmick matches the promotion has held.

The second hour of the broadcast would be a new episode of TNA's flagship program, *Impact* (whether it would air live was undecided at press time.) The culminating event of the evening, according to TNA's press release, would be the revealing of a new gimmick match that will take place at the promotion's Destination X pay-per-view that was to be held on March 11.

This direct challenge to WWE is a bold move by TNA. It also takes TNA a step closer to rekindling a genuine interpromotional war.

You have the right to remain silent—completely silent ... It was only last issue that Trish Stratus' new project, *Armed & Famous*—a reality program featuring celebrities as members of a fully functioning suburban Indiana police force—was being touted as a good move for the seven-time former WWE women's champion. Unfortunately, the powers-that-be at CBS did not share the same feeling of “Stratusfaction” as Stratus' many wrestling fans, as the network cancelled the show only four episodes into its first season.

The program, which peaked at number 44 in the overall ratings before taking a downhill slide, was picked up by VH-1, which is scheduled to air the final few taped episodes.

Always gracious, even in times of defeat, Stratus commented in an online interview with about.com, “It was amazing. It was an eye-opening experience. I learned a lot about myself and my determination.”

WWE Stockwatch

(For the period of January 1 to 31, 2007)

30-Day High: 16.66 on January 16, 2007

30-Day Low: 15.84 on January 26, 2007

52-Week High: 18.54 on June 2, 2006

52-Week Low: 14.22 on February 17, 2006

Following a successful holiday season, WWE executives have reason to believe that 2007 will further enhance the company's fiscal health. If that's true, WWE's stock price—which has become stagnant in recent months—will most likely rise.

Indeed, WWE's 2006 numbers are probably the best indicator for what lies ahead. For example, WWE's video game sales had grown 49 percent between 2005 and 2006. The action figure market has also shown signs of improvement.

The price of WWE stock should also benefit from the proliferation of WWE 24/7. The monthly cable subscription service that features archived programs from WWE's vast video library will now be available through Interactive Optimum, a New York digital cable provider, thus allowing the company to tap into a huge metropolitan market.

The company is poised to continue its venture into other areas of the entertainment and telecommunications market in 2007. The release of “Stone-Cold” Steve Austin's feature film as well as wwe.com's rumored implementation of a content-based pay service should help keep WWE on the cutting edge in 2007.

TV breakdown

RAW (USA)

January 8: 3.7
January 15: 4.1
January 22: 4.1
January 29: 4.2
February 5: 4.1

Analysis: It may seem odd to assert that WWE should be concerned with Raw's current ratings trend. Scoring consistently in the high-3.0s and low-4.0s is a problem any other wrestling promotion would love to have. Yet Raw's inability to rise above the low-4s indicates a level of stagnation that must be troubling to WWE executives, considering they can no longer blame Monday Night Football for stealing viewers. Like WWE's other brands, Raw earned its best numbers during the week following The Royal Rumble, where Raw star Shawn Michaels was one of the final two combatants in the actual Rumble match. The edition of Raw that aired the night after the Rumble, which featured Michaels and Raw World champion John Cena defeating Rated RKO for the World tag team title, earned a 4.2 overall rating.

ECW (SCI-FI)

January 9: 1.4
January 16: 1.5
January 23: 1.5
January 30: 1.7
February 6: 1.4

Analysis: Like a late-night horror movie of yesteryear, ECW keeps coming back to life even after it appears to be dead. The much-maligned brand did not score huge numbers in January, but it did stay within a consistent mid-1.0 range. The January 9 episode, which drew a 1.4, has the dubious distinction of being the lowest-rated live ECW broadcast to date, and, with rumors swirling that all ECW programs are likely to be pre-taped in the future, it could be ECW's final live broadcast. Like Raw, ECW enjoyed a bump in its numbers following The Royal Rumble. This is somewhat impressive, considering that ECW's offering at the Rumble—ECW champion Bobby Lashley's countout victory over Test—didn't result in any compelling implications that would have encouraged fans to watch the program that week. Patience for the hardcore brand within WWE may be running out, but ECW's television numbers seem to justify its continued existence.

SMACKDOWN (CW)

January 5: 3.0
January 12: 2.6
January 19: 2.9
January 26: 2.6
February 2: 3.1

Analysis: Smackdown continues to impress fans with angles that don't insult their intelligence and has made significant in-roads in making its hottest-rising star, Ken Kennedy, a legitimate World title contender. Still, January was not a banner month for the brand, although it had enjoyed solid numbers—especially for a pre-taped Friday night program—in late-2006. Smackdown received an expected boost on February 2, the brand's first broadcast following The Royal Rumble. That night, the Internet chatter of special appearances by John Cena and Shawn Michaels, helping set up the main event for No Way Out in February, was the likely reason for the impressive numbers jump. Still, Smackdown has done a phenomenal job of elevating new talent and is moving in a positive direction.

IMPACT (Spike TV)

January 4: 1.1
January 11: 1.1
January 18: 1.1
January 24: 0.8
January 31: 1.0

Analysis: While still not attracting WWE-size audiences, *Impact* has finally found its niche on Spike TV, resulting in solid weekly numbers throughout January. TNA showcased all of its top talent in compelling matches leading up to—and immediately following—Turning Point, resulting in three consecutive weeks of 1.1 overall ratings. The January 24 program, focusing on the Sting-Abyss feud and featuring NWA World champion Christian Cage vs. Christopher Daniels, dropped a bit in the ratings. This slip was likely due to *Impact* airing on Wednesday night rather than its regular Thursday night time slot. *Impact* is showing signs of sustainability in the very competitive Thursday night market, which is good news for those advocating the addition of a second hour to the program.

win, lose, or draw

By Harry Burkett

IT ALL STARTED with a simple paragraph in the October 1984 issue of *Inside Wrestling*. As it turned out, the words—and advice—had a profound influence on the direction of my life.

In that issue, Craig Peters devoted his “On The Road” column to answering the questions he received most from wrestling fans. Question number four went as follows: “How can I break into wrestling journalism?”

Peters answered, “The best answer is simply work, work, work on your writing. Write for the school newspaper. If you like music, write record reviews. If you like sports, write accounts of your favorite ballgame or wrestling match. Write as much as you can, and always strive to improve your writing. But keep writing, and someday, after receiving hundreds of rejection letters, you may get a job at a newspaper or a magazine.”

I was probably a bigger fan of PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED and its sister magazines than of wrestling itself. Harley Race winning an unprecedented seventh NWA World

title, Nick Bockwinkel losing the AWA World title in Japan, Andre the Giant turning against Hulk Hogan—none of it was official in my world until I read about it in *PWI*.

So, I took Peters' advice. I began sending “Correspondents Reports” to *The Wrestler*, studied journalism and feature writing in college, worked for a weekly newspaper, and became managing editor of a healthcare publica-

tion. Finally, I landed a dream come true—a writing gig with *PWI*.

That was in 1997. Now, on the 10th anniversary of that momentous event in my life, I'm proud to say that Stu Saks has allowed me the honor of serving as editor-in-chief of *PWI* and its sister publications.

Craig Peters would probably find it hard to believe that some kid—22 years ago—consumed and internalized every word of that advice and took the steps necessary to turn that dream into reality.

Although I have been an editor by trade, I have been a writer at heart. That's one reason I didn't want to leave my cushy home office in Maryland to work in Pennsylvania five days a week. Wrestling is such an evolving business that the writing work hadn't grown stale. But I knew there was an altogether different dimension to working for *PWI*, namely the nuts-and-bolts publish-

ing end. I realized that my ongoing *PWI* adventure wouldn't be complete without it.

In many respects, the everyday duties are very similar to other publishing jobs I've had. Assigning stories, editing copy, proofreading, and meeting deadlines are basic responsibilities of any editor. Yet there is an aspect to working at *PWI* that I haven't experienced at other publishing jobs:

Photo archives.

I always knew that photos were a vital part of any sports magazine, including *PWI*. But, for the past decade, I have focused only on the written word and lost sight of the bigger picture. Photos, as well as words, are the lifeblood of this magazine. Managing Editor Lisa Rocchi and I are responsible for



Yes, that is the mighty Bruno Sammartino on the right, seeming much like an innocent kid brother. His brother, Paul, is on the left, and his sister, Mary, is in the middle. This is just one of the gems that new Editor-in-Chief Harry Burkett discovered in our photo archives.

selecting the right photos to go with each story. Words can give you the feel of a particular time and place, but photos put you right there in the middle of the action. They are an integral part of telling a wrestling story.

London Publishing's photographers have been there to document nearly every historic wrestling event: NWA World champion Lou Thesz and challenger Danny Hodge battling to a 90-minute draw; Bruno Sammartino sling- ing an ailing Buddy Rogers into an over-the- shoulder backbreaker to win the WWWF cham- pionship in 48 seconds; Kerry Von Erich pinning Ric Flair for the NWA World title in 1984; and Hulk Hogan bodyslamming Andre the Giant at WrestleMania III.

Then there are the color slides from the 1970s and early-'80s: A bloody Freddie Blassie vs. a bloody Sheik; Bob Armstrong, his face a crimson mask; Bobby Heenan looking like someone tried to open his head with a can open- er; Ric Flair vs. Paul Jones in a bloodbath; and Buzz Sawyer liter- ally digging his fingernails under the skin on Tommy Rich's fore- head. All the stars of the era are there, all in their gory glory. I can feel the blood oozing off my fin- gers as I put the binders back on the shelf.

Care to dig deeper? *PWI's* archives actually go back to the turn of the last century. We have photos of Frank Gotch, George Hackenschmidt, Earl Caddock, John Pesek, Stanislaus Zbyszko, Ed "Strangler" Lewis—all of the greats from the early-1900s into the 1920s. Heck, we even have a drawing of Tom Jenkins, who was recognized throughout the country as the American heavyweight



What's wrong? Haven't you ever seen a masked man chopping wood? Burkett has come across several quirky and downright bizarre shots since working at the *PWI* office. Another of his personal favorites is Mr. Wrestling II eating spaghetti while wearing a chinless mask.

champion as early as 1899.

Over a century later, we receive most of our photos on CDs, which we pop into our computers, point- ing and clicking from one image to another without getting up from our chairs. Need a photo of Carlito? We type in his name, find the CD number, and, *voila*, there's one cool shot of Carlito.

Years from now, that digital image will look as new as it does in 2007 (that is, unless you listen to some of the experts, who claim that such information will one day decide to vanish). There won't be an ink stamp on the back, telling us the name of the fancy New York studio where Antonino Rocca posed for that shot. No more of Tony Lanza's black and whites with his trademark "Lanza" emblazoned across the bottom. No more of Theo Ehret's signa- tures scrawled on shots of California wrestling beauties. No more dog-eared corners, finger- prints, or coffee stains on the lam- inated images. The days of leaf- ing through wrestling history will be over.

Some of the photo files have given me pause, such as the one

devoted to Magnum T.A., whose career was cut short by a car accident in 1986. His Porsche wrapped around a telephone pole, and, sure enough, we have a shot of the mangled mess sit- ting in a salvage yard. We have photos of Magnum T.A. in his hospital bed, putting on a brave face for his fans; the file also con- tains handwritten notes from his wife, Tracey, who was nice enough to send us an update of his condition in 1999.

And my personal favorite? I came across that within a few days of working in the office. It was within a file simply titled, "Bruno In Italy (Child)." The shot looks like it came from a photo booth, with "Da Young Brune" posing innocently beside his brother, Paul, and his sister, Mary. The Bruno that I know was the legendary WWWF champion, a burly, barrel-chested power- house. But here he is, just a boy. Maybe that should inspire all of the youngsters out there. If that skinny kid can become a legend, so can you.

And if this skinny kid can make it to *PWI*, so can you. □

the straight shooter

By Dan Murphy

WRESTLING SOCIETY X isn't as bad as I thought it would be. I realize that may not sound like a ringing endorsement, but it is meant to be a compliment.

Last summer, Teddy Hart talked my ear off about the new upstart MTV promotion. He talked a good game, but then again, Teddy always

does. While he was thrilled to be part of a company that would be built around exciting, young high-flyers, I wasn't so sure the concept would take off.

Let's face it: Wrestling just isn't "cool," at least as far as mainstream audiences are concerned. That's not to take a cheapshot at wrestling, it's just being honest.

Wrestling is a niche attraction. These days, so is the NHL. On any given night in the Murphy household—or at a watering hole within a couple mile radius of the Murphy household—you can probably find me watching one of those two niche sports. I enjoy those niches.

But, as a 32-year-old guy who still prefers cassette tapes to CDs (and, God forbid, MP3s), I don't think I'm part of the MTV demographic anymore. I didn't think MTV viewers would give pro wrestling a chance—and I'm still not sure how long they will.

I've railed against "indy spot-monkeys" in this column before. Maybe I'm becoming a dinosaur—after all, I still don't own a cell phone and will file this column on a dial-up

Internet connection. I just don't see the appeal of three-minute, psychology-free matches featuring a lightning-quick string of over-choreographed moves. Why risk your neck with an insane corkscrew suicide plancha when 10 seconds later both you and your opponent are back in the ring, with no sign of ill-effects from that move, setting up the next insane spot to pop the crowd? What's the point?

The aforementioned Teddy Hart is guilt of those transgressions at times, but I've also seen him wrestle some very, very good bouts with stronger pacing, decent psychology, and high spots that have meaning. But the way he described WSX, he made it sound like every match would be a sprint of one gravity-defying move after another. In short, everything I hate about "indy spot-monkeys."

I actually forgot about WSX's debut until I noticed it on my DVR (okay, so I have some high-tech tendencies—I'm not a caveman). With equal parts trepidation and curiosity, I hit "play" and settled in to watch wrestling's latest train wreck.

The first match in WSX history confirmed my fears. Matt Sydal took on Jack Evans in what should have been a solid opening match. Both guys obviously wanted to get as much offense in as possible, being that it was their national TV debut, but they were given only 3:30 for their match. During that time, I counted 17 cutaway shots to Sydal's valet, Lizzie Valentine, who also interfered in the match, was part of the finish, and was teased in a post-match bit that insinuated she had an eye for Evans. So, roughly every 12 seconds, the camera was on Lizzie, meaning she got more real face-time than either of the guys who were actually busting their tails in the ring.

Of course, with frequent crowd shots (many of whom were paid models who were clearly told to act excited, but didn't really have any rooting interest in the match), the lack of a traditional hard camera that takes in the entire ring, and frequent panning shots, it looked more like a Mountain Dew commercial



Photos by Mike Lano

Teddy Hart may be as guilty as any WSX wrestler of utilizing high spots for a pop from the crowd, but Dan Murphy thinks that Hart's well-rounded ability makes up for such transgressions and helps make MTV's newest venture into pro wrestling a potential success.

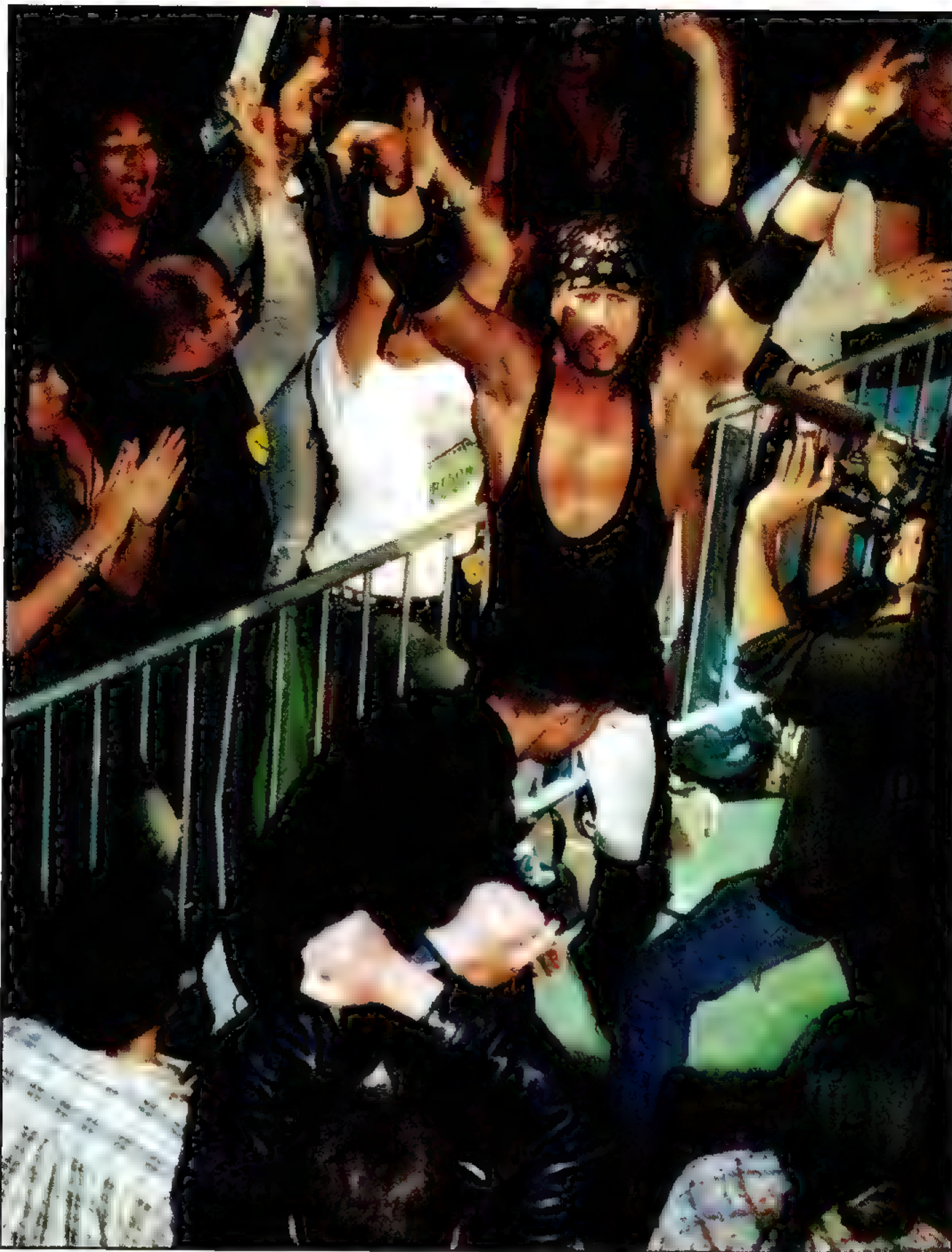
than a wrestling match. It was to wrestling what the NHL All-Star game was to playoff hockey—a pale imitation dressed up with “edgy” camera work.

The battle royal that followed also had some pretty glaring flaws. Justin Credible was actually announced as an “11-time ECW and WWF champion,” which actually made me laugh out loud. After a couple of minutes, MTV cut to an extended commercial break. When the show returned, the match was still in progress, which means—even with ridiculously fast-paced matches—MTV was still editing for time.

Then the eliminations started fast and furiously. Chris Hamrick went through a table. Teddy went through a table. The unfortunately named Youth Suicide took a power bomb onto thumbtacks before being slammed onto an electrified cage. I’m pretty sure Alcatraz exploded just as New Jack did one of his crazy balcony dives. I was shaking my head at the sheer lunacy of all of this when I suddenly realized something:

I was enjoying the match. For all its preposterousness, WSX was fun.

The second episode had its flaws, but it was light years better than the debut. That ’70s Team had a short but fun match against Team Dragon Gate. The Trailer Park Boyz did a great comedy promo. Human Tornado showed some spark in his win over Luke Hawx. And Vampiro and 6-Pac had a passable main event with a finish



One tip via Senior Writer Dan Murphy: Don’t use 6-Pac as a tough guy. He makes a much better underdog. Or perhaps he could be a calming veteran influence like his old rival, Jerry Lynn, is in TNA.

that saw a bloody Vampiro score the pin after hitting a piledriver through an exploding casket.

A few suggestions:

- Get rid of the brain-numbingly annoying ring announcer, Fabian Kaelin.

- Use a hard camera. The *Blair Witch Project* editing detracts from the matches.

- Stick to just two well-paced matches per show.

- If you’re going to use 6-Pac, you

have to use him in an underdog role. He makes a lousy tough-guy heel.

- Open up tapings to true wrestling fans instead of paid extras.

WSX isn’t perfect by any means, but it’s got real potential to develop a cult following as an alternative to the staid-by-comparison WWE and TNA.

Maybe ... just maybe ... Teddy Hart had it right. WSX just *might* change wrestling as we know it. And that may not be a bad thing. □

the trade's mark

By Frank Ingiosi

IN EARLY-2007, MAJOR League Baseball released the names of the men who would be forever immortalized in the sport's Hall of Fame. This year, the class of 2007 consisted of two players that I grew up watching: Baltimore Orioles shortstop Cal Ripken Jr. and the

San Diego Padres outfielder Tony Gwynn.

While both men deservedly assumed their respective spots amongst baseball's immortals, some notable names (specifically Mark McGwire) were conspicuously missing the requisite votes needed for induction.

While it was virtually a lock for Ripken and Gwynn, the sport nonetheless promoted the uncertainty surrounding the final vote, going so far as to highlight some of those greats whose career statistics placed them on the proverbial bubble of induction. Naturally, my thoughts turned to wrestling.

Here at *PWI*, we recognize *The Wrestling Observer* Hall of Fame as the sport's official place of immortal recognition. Without speaking for everyone, I will admit that I—as a purveyor of wrestling journalism—appreciate the thoughtful selection process and the rightful recognition (in many instances) of the *Observer's* Hall.

This year, much like baseball, the *Observer* inducted someone I watched as a child. Eddie Guerrero, this year's most prominent

John Cena has fought through the boos to find some cheers. But that still might not be enough to grant him entry into the *PWI*-recognized *Wrestling Observer* Hall of Fame.

inductee, is now forever linked with the greatness he brought to the sport and, like Ripken and Gwynn, "Latino Heat" enjoyed a fantastic career. He is very deserving of his induction and any accolades he may receive.

Synapses exploding, my thoughts then turned from the past to the present and eventual future of "wrestling immortality"—a phrase that's bandied about all too frequently in today's industry. Who among the current crop of stars will one day assume the mantle and secure a place amongst the greats of the sport? My initial assessment was, to say the least, astonishing.

At first glance, it appears that today's wrestling fan may actually be living in what could be called—for lack of better phrasing—a modern "golden age." Consider some of the names that will be up for consideration for a place in the Hall before their careers are through. Men such as Booker T, Sting, and Edge all seem likely to make that move at some point, whereas perennial contenders such as Christopher Daniels, Randy Orton, or Christian Cage may end up on the bubble.

Of course, one man who should be a no-brainer, yet I can guarantee will be met with an amazing amount of resistance, is none other than rapper/actor/Subway pitchman/world champion John Cena. That's right: The man who has dominated the WWE airwaves for much of the past three years will likely have trouble gaining the amount of votes necessary for induction into the *Observer's* Hall.

Naturally, arguments can be made for either side of the "Cena: in or out of the Hall of Fame" argument. Many out there feel that Cena is a glorified bodybuilder with little wrestling skill and have said ... well ... pretty much exactly that. Being on top during a time when the entertainment aspect of the business has raced past the sports aspect has hurt Cena greatly. Yet, as champion, Cena has performed surprisingly well, evidenced by his assumption of the top spot in





Cena might not be the unanimous people's choice, but few can argue that he has not proven himself against the best of the best, even against another potential Hall of Famer, King Booker.

our Wrestler of the Year balloting. Cena was *the* top guy in sports entertainment for the year 2006.

Was he—or will he ever be considered—the best pure wrestler in any promotion? *Ahh*, how about “not a snowball’s chance in hell”? Is he the most charismatic? Possibly. Cena evokes a response from every single fan both in attendance and watching from home.

Still not convinced? Well, in the spirit of all things statistics, let’s go to the numbers. The other night, I sat at home and went through all of John Cena’s results (on Raw only—hell, even I have my limits) in the hopes of figuring out whether or not 2006—arguably Cena’s most successful year—would put him in line for a Hall of Fame nod. The results were, much like the man’s legacy itself, a bit misleading.

As Raw World champion for much of 2006, Cena carried a win percentage of 68.7 (including tag matches) with a singles record of 30 wins, six losses, and six no-decisions. That’s a low-C average at any state university in the land, although many of his matches were main events against other top wrestlers in the company.

Sure, his numbers aren’t Hogan or Backlund-esque, but in today’s

WWE, Cena’s record is pretty damn impressive. Of course, with no one but me keeping track of stats, likely none of this will even come into play when Cena’s name is mentioned in Hall voting. But, to quote legendary philosopher Jérôme “Curly” Howard, Cena might just be a “victim of circumstance.”

The truth is that as wrestling has moved further into other aspects of media (i.e. film, music, etc.), champions have become less wrestling god and more bankable commodity. As a wrestler, Cena is passable at best (although I don’t remember Hogan breaking out a submission move), yet as a bankable commodity, any company would be thrilled to have him as its top star.

Is he Hall-worthy? That’s not for me to decide. But, in the spirit of sports, it’s always fun to debate the possibilities. But, if 2006 is indicative of what the rest of his career holds, then John Cena should become a member of wrestling’s pantheon in due course. □

Questions, comments, concerns you’d like Frank to address? Send it all to PWI_ingiosi@yahoo.com. Also, be sure to check out Frank’s online column, “The Turn,” which is posted each week at www.pwi-online.com.

DON'T MISS

PWI UPDATE WITH FRANK INGIOSI

EXCLUSIVELY ON:
pwi-online.com

Pro Wrestling Illustrated Managing Editor Frank Ingiosi, is insightful, provocative, and downright funny! You’ve read “The Trade’s Mark” in *PWI*. Now check out Frank’s column, “The Turn,” every Friday afternoon.

Ingiosi On Undertaker vs. Henry: “The Undertaker looked great, hitting spot after spot and manhandling Henry as if he were a sack of potatoes (which, ironically, will rank three spots higher than Henry in this year’s *PWI* 500.)”

Ingiosi On Joey Styles’ Promo: “Nothing was sacred, as Styles attacked some of the company’s ridiculous storylines, as well as the chairman himself. Basically, for one beautiful three-minute span, Styles was the voice of every disgruntled fan.”

Ingiosi On WWE Women: “I hope something relatively interesting happens soon, because I’m actually getting tired of this weekly, mind-numbingly repetitive catfight between Mickie James, Ashley, and Trish. It’s actually gotten to the point where it bores me both as a wrestling fan and as a man. Did I just write that?”

Frank Ingiosi ...
on pwi-online.com!

7501/05.06

You're at the airport. You see your favorite wrestler relaxing in one of the terminals. You rush up to him or her as questions fill your excited mind. There are certain things you just *have* to know about this person. Well, these are the 12 questions you'd never think of asking

12 questions

Chasyn Rance

1

You were trained by WWF preliminary wrestler Rusty Brooks. On average, how many times per day did he mention his 1986 match against Hulk Hogan?

He loves talking about that match with Hogan. That was the one thing he requested from Vince McMahon, a match against Hogan. He likes to talk about an e-mail he got where a fan said that was one of the most memorable matches he ever saw. He loves talking about it. But who could blame him? It was against Hogan!

2

You frequently team with Larry Zbyszko as Team Vision. Have you ever actually been to Larry Land?

I've heard plenty of 20-year-old girls have been there. But, as for me personally, I can't say I've ever been to Larry Land.

3

Which is a more rare breed: an honest promoter or an ivory-billed woodpecker?

I've worked for more than 70 different companies, and I've got to say an honest promoter is pretty hard to find. I don't think anybody would disagree with me about that.

4

In your opinion, how many cats is a person allowed to own before they technically can be considered a "crazy cat person"?

Well, you can't count kittens because you can have a couple of pregnant cats that have litters of five or six kittens each, and then you've got 15 cats running around. I wouldn't consider my mother crazy, for example. I'd say if you have 25 Persian cats, then that means you're one of those people.

5

Speaking of crazy people, why is your phone number on Teddy Hart's old business cards?

I was staying with Teddy at one time, back when we were working with Major League Wrestling. Teddy is one of those guys who likes to be as unreachable as possible but still be within grasp. For some reason, he decided to put my number on his cards. I still get phone

calls from people asking for Teddy. It happens all the time.

6

Is bowling a sport?

Wow, that question kind of came out of nowhere. Bowling is as much of a sport as golf is. It requires skill in a particular area. It's not something athletic, like wrestling.

7

Would you rather be stranded on a desert island with Umaga, Larry Zbyszko, or master impressionist Rich Little?

Umaga would probably eat me, Rich Little's awful impressions would probably kill me. I'm sure if there were some trees on the island, Larry and I could have a good time.

8

How does it feel to see fans hitting on your valet, So Cal Val?

First of all, most of those fans aren't hitting on Val—they're hitting on me. But we just brush them off. I don't mind it. We go home, get drunk, and laugh about it. And that's when the real fun begins.

9

What's the most bizarre gimmick you've ever seen on the independent circuit?

I think his name was The Soul Stealer. He had a glove, and when he grabbed a guy's head, he would steal the guy's soul. Then, later in the night, the glove turned on the guy. I think it took his soul. It was terrible. I did a lot of drinking as I watched that show.

10

Where's the best place to stop for food after a show?

Applebee's. It seems like after every show, especially after FIP [Full Impact Pro] shows, we go to Applebee's. It's not the greatest food, but you can't beat half-price appetizers. All of the guys like that.

11

If you could post just one of your matches on YouTube, which would you choose and why?

Probably the 20-man battle royal I just had. It was me, Allison Danger, and three other workers in there against 15 backyarders that we beat up. It was the kind of match that would be appreciated by any real worker that hates backyard kids.

12

If you could put Icy Hot in the jock strap of any one wrestler as a rib, who would you choose?

Oh, man, that's tough. Let me go through my phone book here. Who gets the Icy Hot? Here we go—Jack Evans. A little bit of Icy Hot would make all of his flips that much more fun, I think.





Ed Don George

The Wrestling Observer

Hall of Fame

In each issue, *PWI* will honor one member of the *Wrestling Observer* Hall of Fame, which we recognize as the sport's official Hall of Fame

THE MOST VISIBLE wrestler of our time to successfully make the transition from Olympic competition to the squared circle is undoubtedly Kurt Angle. But about 70 years before Angle ever stepped into a pro ring, Ed Don George blazed the trail before him.

Edward Nicholas George was born in the sleepy town of North Java, New York, in 1905. At the age

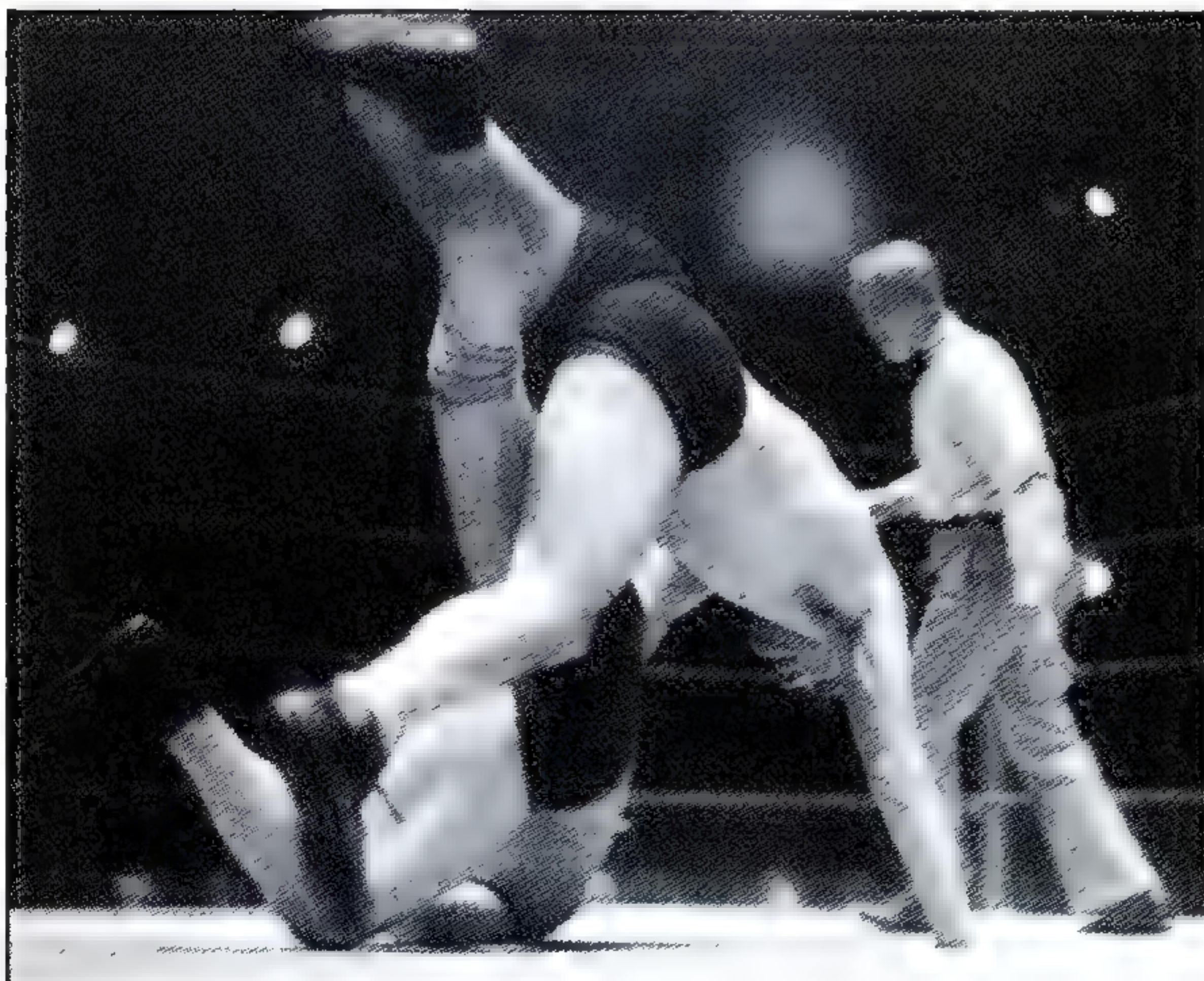
of 14, he enrolled at Canisius High School in Buffalo, New York, doing work at logging camps and local farms over summer vacations. He attended both the University of Michigan and St. Bonaventure University, where he faced some of the top collegiate wrestlers in the nation. George won the national AAU championship in the heavy-weight division and qualified to represent the United States in the 1928 Olympic Games in Amsterdam. George fell just short of coming home with a bronze medal, coming

in fourth place in his weight class in freestyle competition.

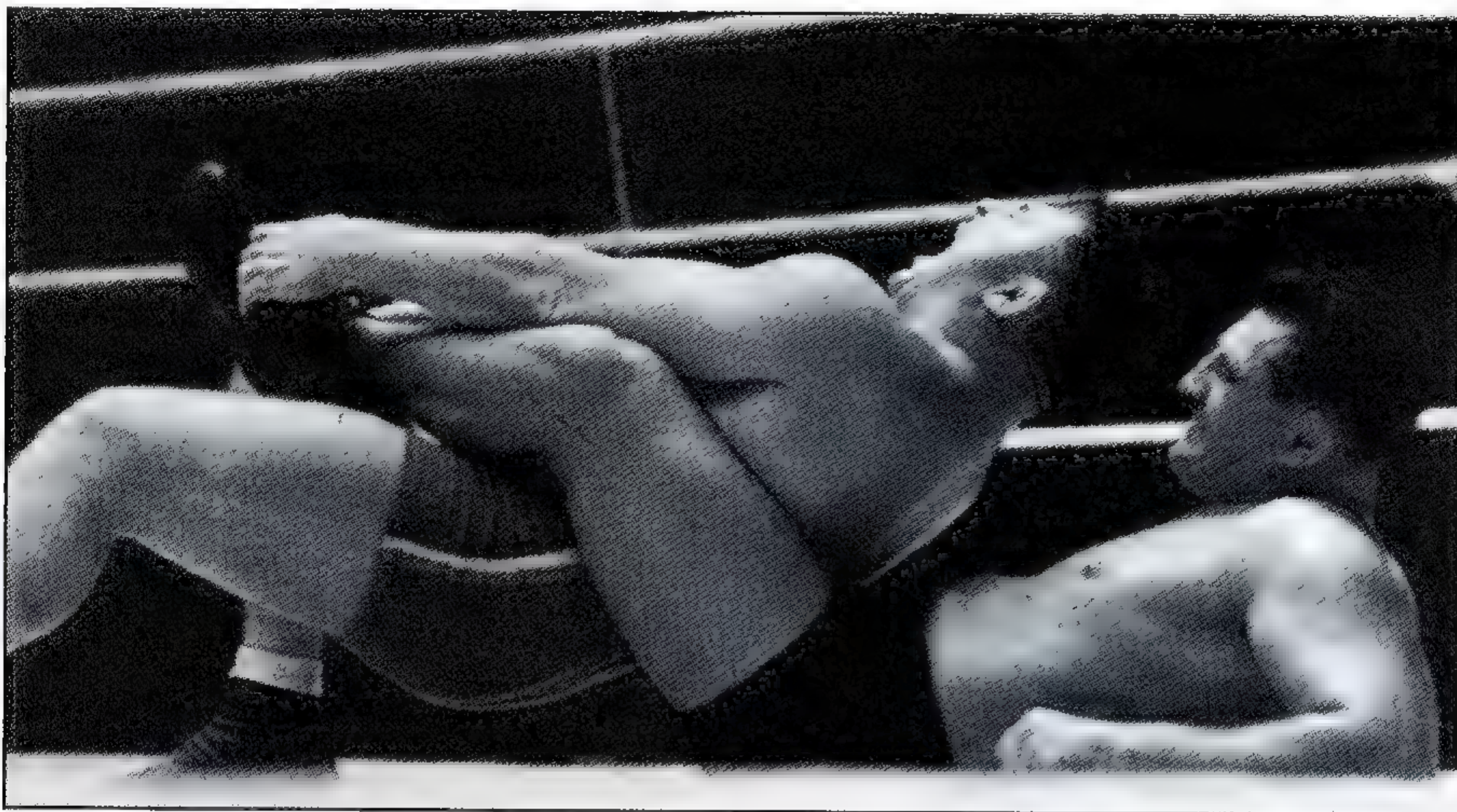
After graduating with a degree in engineering, George had a chance meeting with a wrestling promoter working with a traveling carnival in Batavia, New York. Swayed by the promoter (who saw dollar signs at the prospect of putting a 6'1", 219-pound Olympian in the ring), George decided to try his hand at pro wrestling, quitting his job with the Firestone Tire Company. He adopted the ring name of "Ed Don George" and made his pro debut in November 1929. George's Olympic experience earned him instant credibility, and he quickly became a main-event competitor.

Somewhat surprisingly, George adopted the airplane spin—a move he clearly could never have used on the amateur mats—as his primary finishing move. The airplane spin was a novel and crowd-pleasing move at the time, and George became a major draw in several National Wrestling Association territories, especially in Hawaii, where he was a huge crowd favorite. George also utilized a particularly grinding side headlock, as well as a flashy flying tackle and a hammerlock.

On December 10, 1930—less than a year after making his pro debut—George won a version of the world championship, beating Gus Sonnenberg for the title. However, several territories disputed who was the rightful world cham-



Constantly battling to gain recognition as the official world champion, George participated in an array of matches against others who claimed to be the champ, such as Jim Browning during this December 18, 1933, match at Madison Square Garden.



In this 1937 match, George applies a bodyscissors to former world champion Henri DeGlane. Like George, the French star first became famous when he competed in the Olympics.

pion, with George recognized in Massachusetts, Ed "Strangler" Lewis recognized on the West Coast and the Midwest, and Henri DeGlane recognized in Canada and pockets of the Northeast.

In 1931, George lost a controversial bout to Lewis, but he would re-stake his world title claim in 1933, beating DeGlane in Boston. The world title lineage remained muddled throughout the decade, yet George consistently remained in the championship picture. In 1939, George would capture yet another version of the world title, beating Steve Casey for the original AWA title in 1939.

Though the number of world championships George won will forever be disputed, he remained one of the top draws of the 1930s and was regarded as one of the most skilled legitimate wrestlers of his era. He wrestled Jim Browning to a 100-minute time-limit draw at Madison Square Garden in a title-unification bout in 1933, and also took Danno Mahoney to two draws totaling almost five hours in length in 1934.

In 1942, George retired from wrestling and enlisted in the U.S.

Navy. He served as a Naval commander during World War II and trained cadets in hand-to-hand combat until he was discharged in 1945.

George bought the promotional rights to the Buffalo territory in 1947 and began promoting wrestling cards in Western New York. As a promoter, George emphasized technical ability and athletic prowess, and helped make the territory one of the strongest wrestling markets in the Northeast. George also discovered a young Dick Beyer, who went on to professional fame as The Destroyer.

He sold the promotional rights to the Buffalo territory to Pedro Martinez in 1956 and briefly promoted wrestling events in Havana, Cuba, before returning stateside.

George died in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, in

1985 at the age of 81. He was one of the most successful and respected wrestlers of the 1930s and went on to become a successful and influential promoter. He is a charter member of *The Wrestling Observer* Hall of Fame. □



George found continued success in the wrestling business as a promoter. Emphasizing particular importance on technical and athletic prowess, George (pictured with another Olympic competitor, Mad Dog Vachon) developed one of the strongest territories in the Northeast.

independent roundup

By Al Alven

FOR MANY UP-AND-COMING stars, career journeymen, and lesser-known veterans alike, gaining exposure is an essential step up on the ladder of success. This is why the debut of Wrestling Society X in late-January was met with such excitement and optimism in the locker rooms of small promotions across North America.

Familiar faces such as **Vampiro**, **6-Pac** (Sean Waltman), **Justin Credible**, and **New Jack** headline WSX, a joint venture between MTV and Big Vision Entertainment. But the backbone of its roster is made up almost entirely of youthful indy regulars gaining their first taste of national exposure. The pilot episode kicked off with high-flyers **Jack Evans** and **Matt Sydal** (seconded by **Lizzy Valentine**) electrifying the crowd with an aerial display unlike anything presently seen on WWE or TNA programming.

Subsequently, the talents of numerous prospects such as **Teddy Hart**, **Kaos**, **Human Tornado**, **Puma**,

Luke Hawx, **Joey "Magnum" Ryan** and **Disco Machine** have been showcased, with many more slated for the future.

With a chaotic, mile-a-minute presentation that integrates the diverse cultures of underground wrestling and music, the WSX product has been met with mixed reviews. The performers themselves, however, certainly welcome this addition to the wrestling landscape.

"Wrestling Society X is going to revolutionize

the business," explained Evans, shortly after defeating Sydal with his 630 splash in the promotion's first televised match. "This is something special, and it's going to open up a lot of doors. It's going to provide a chance for many of the great talents that are out there and will give fans a chance to see wrestlers and things they never thought they'd see.

"To me," he continued, "this is the big time."

Which, incidentally, kick-starts an intriguing philosophical debate: Should WSX be considered an independent or a major company under WWE and TNA in wrestling's hierarchy? What, exactly, constitutes an independent? Does the presence of a national TV contract automatically elevate the upstart promotion?

Expect this matter to be explored as WSX continues to evolve.

Speaking of evolution, **Homicide's** reputation as a perennial runner-up in Ring of Honor was finally vanquished when the "Notorious 187" defeated **Bryan Danielson** to become the company's eighth champion at Final Battle 2006 in late-December.

Homicide started off the new year in a big way, defeating **Chris Hero** in his first title defense. However, Hero's new "super agent," **Larry Sweeney**, has promised to secure another shot for his well-traveled client. He'll have to wait in line, as the list of potential challengers is a long one. Heading the crowded field are **Delirious** and **Jimmy Rave**, who many observers feel are primed to become breakout stars in 2007.

It turns out that Homicide's longtime rival, **Samoa Joe**, will no longer be a contender for the ROH title. Joe, one of the founding fathers of ROH and arguably its greatest champion, will be focusing on his TNA career and occasional overseas tours. He was scheduled to finish out his ROH commitments—in both the U.S. and abroad—by the end of February.

Meanwhile, Danielson, who took an immediate leave of absence from the sport after his title loss to Homicide, continues to rehab his injured shoulder. ROH officials have given no definite timetable on his return, though it is believed that Danielson will be out of action until May at the earliest.

Los Angeles-based Pro Wrestling Guerrilla crowned a new champion when Human Tornado (who seems to be everywhere these days) ended Joey Ryan's historic 13-month reign on January 12. PWG Commissioner **Dino Winwood**, who always seems to be at odds with the



Vampiro, a 17-year veteran, is bound to be a long-term headliner in Wrestling Society X. The brooding figure, made famous in North America by his WCW stint, will also be a major influence on up-and-coming stars both in the ring and behind the scenes as a booker for the show.

arrogant Ryan, excitedly proclaimed the beginning of a "new era" for the company.

On the same show, the ever-popular **Cape Fear** (**El Generico** and **Quicksilver**) successfully defended the PWG tag team title against **Los Luchas** (**Zokre** and **Phoenix Star**), and **Frankie Kazarian** defeated **Scorpio Sky** in a loser-leaves-PWG match.

The next generation of Hart family members in the industry continues to emerge. Teddy Hart, as previously mentioned, is already off to a good start in WSX. Recently, WWE announced the signing of **Nattie Neidhart**, the daughter of **Jim "The Anvil" Neidhart**, to a developmental deal. She joins another third-generation cousin, **Harry Smith**, the son of the late "**British Bulldog**" **Davey Boy Smith**, in the company's developmental system. Neidhart was assigned to Deep South Wrestling, where she will begin her training.

WWE also inked former TNA talent **Cassidy Riley** and veteran indy star **Ace Steel** to developmental contracts. Steel, who portrayed **Donald Trump** in the ill-received "Donald vs. Rosie" skit on Raw, is an accomplished grappler from the Midwest who is best known for training current ECW star **C.M. Punk** and indy favorite **Colt Cabana**.

Few details have emerged in the case of **Claudio Castagnoli**, who signed a developmental deal back in November. Castagnoli was released before even starting with DSW. On his MySpace site, the Swiss-born technical wiz denied rumors there were problems with his work visa. WWE has not commented on the matter, and Castagnoli is back working for several independent promotions.

In other WWE developmental news, **Bill DeMott** was removed as head DSW trainer in a move that surprised everyone, including territory owner **Jody Hamilton**. **Tom Pritchard**, who had a part in training numerous Ohio Valley wrestlers who are major WWE stars today, will be his replacement.

Recent Title Changes

Combat Zone Wrestling, Philadelphia, PA, January 13: **Blackout** (**Ruckus** & **Sabian**) defeated **The Original Blackout** (**Onyx** & **Rainman**) to win the tag team title ... **NWA Shockwave, Boonton, NJ, January 13:** **Havok** won a gauntlet match to become the first Shockwave champion; earlier in the show, **Papadon** won a four-way over **Josh Daniels**, **Grim Reefer**, and **Mike Tobin** to claim the Shockwave Internet championship ... **Deep South Wrestling, Jackson, GA, January 19:** **The Majors Brothers** (**Brett** & **Brian**) beat **The Samoan Fight Club** (**Sonny Siaki** & **Afa Jr.**), **William Regal**, and **Dave Taylor** in a three-way to win the tag team title ... **International Wrestling Cartel, Elizabeth, PA, January 19:** **Troy Lords** bested **John McChesney** in an overtime period to win the IWC super indy title ... **NWA Anarchy,**



Hey, it's Donald Trump with his hair under control! No, actually, it's Ace Steel, the longtime indy star who portrayed The Donald on Raw. WWE must be impressed with his work. He has been offered—and has signed—a developmental contract.

Cornelia, GA, January 20: **Justice Served** (**Jason Justice** & **Mike Free**) beat **The Urban Assault Squad** (**Nemesis** & **Shadow Jackson**) to win the tag team title ... **Pro Wrestling Unplugged, Philadelphia, PA, January 20:** **Joker** & **Ricky Reyes** defeated **The SAT** (**Jose** & **Joel Maximo**) and **All Money Is Legal** (**Kay Pusha** & **K-Murda**) in a three-way to capture the tag team title ... **Professional Championship Wrestling, Arlington, TX, January 20:** **Luke Bronson** defeated **Colossus**, **B.J. Turner**, and **Mike Foxx** in a four-way cage match to win the TV title ... **Real Canadian Wrestling, Gibbons, Alberta, January 20:** **Born Against Christians** (**Punishment** & **Strife**) defeated **Brothers in Blood** to win the tag team title ... **Ohio Valley Wrestling, Louisville, KY, January 24:** **Boris Alexiev** beat **Mike Kruel** to become the new TV champion ... **Deep South Wrestling, McDonough, GA, January 25:** **Vito** beat **Bradley Jay** and **Ryan O'Reilly** in a round-robin match to win the heavyweight title ... **Impact Zone Wrestling, Tempe, AZ, January 30:** **Peter Goodman** defeated **Frankie Kazarian**, **John Williams**, and **Lil' Nate** in a four-way to win the heavyweight title. □

the international report

By Mike Spillane



Will Kurt Angle's appearance for New Japan be as noteworthy as his signing with TNA? For Japanese fans, Angle's debut for the promotion is a big deal, although his scheduled opponents—Giant Bernard and Travis Tomko—don't have the same cache as Samoa Joe.

NEW JAPAN PRO Wrestling has been through a few intense weeks, having re-signed the majority of its roster for the entire 2007 calendar year, with some surprises along the way. For starters, reigning IWGP champion **Hiroshi Tanahashi**'s contract stipulates that he must make more appearances in the U.S. in TNA. Tanahashi has wrestled for TNA in the past, but this is the first time New Japan has insisted that talent appear in TNA. Intriguing as this is, it is certainly overshadowed by the fact that TNA's own **Kurt Angle** made his New Japan debut on February 18, and more talent exchanges between New Japan and TNA are imminent.

On the downside for New Japan is a recent wave of injuries taking out both **Masa Chono** and **Naofumi Yamamoto**. Chono, plagued by neck injuries in years past, was pulled off the February tour due to problems with his left ankle. Likewise, Yamamoto, who has a history of knee problems, was yanked from the tour due to an injury to his right arm. Both were expected to miss about a month's worth of action.

The current All Japan Pro Wrestling tour concludes just as we are going to press, and the final night's main event will see **Minoru Suzuki** defending his Triple Crown against **Satoshi Kojima**. Suzuki won the Triple Crown from **Taiyo Kea** in September 2006 in Sapporo, and fans were immediately clamoring for a defense against Kojima. Kojima reigned as Triple Crown champ for 17 months before being upset by Kea, a wrestler many felt made for a weak champion. Suzuki proved them right by defeating Kea in his first title defense, and Suzuki has been red-hot ever since. Suzuki, a freelancer that wrestles on most All Japan tours, will solidify his position as a worthy champion if he can survive the test of Kojima, the company's most dominant heavyweight of the past four years.

For the final night of its tour, All Japan has loaded up its card with stars, from for-

mer sumo **Akebono** to the returning **Great Muta**. In a strange twist, the current tour has also featured **Jinsei Shinzaki**, reprising his mid-'90s WWF character, **Hakushi**, and **Dustin Runnels**, who will be appearing under the name "**Goldustin**." Also on board is **Ro-Z**, a regular with the company for the past two years. WWE fans know him better as **Rosey** of the now-defunct **Three-Minute Warning**.

International star **Konnan**, most recently of TNA and AAA fame, is awaiting surgery for a kidney transplant. Konnan, who has been sidelined for some time with nagging injuries, is in desperate need of the operation, which may have taken place before you read this. The promotion where he rose to superstardom more than a decade ago, AAA, is helping to defray costs by making their March *Rey de Reyes* event (literally, "King of Kings") a benefit show to raise money for Konnan's transplant. Konnan will appear at the show in a managerial capacity only.

The legend of **Mistico** continues to grow. Since his landmark win over **Black Warrior** in their *lucha de apuesta* (bet fight) back in September 2006 that saw Mistico win Warrior's mask, Mistico has made two successful defenses of his own mask. In December, Mistico traveled to Tijuana, Baja California, to answer the challenge of **El Hijo del Diablo**. Diablo, a fixture on the Tijuana scene since the 1990s, began his career in 1979 in Puebla. In his storied career, El Hijo del Diablo won the masks of five other luchadores, but Mistico proved to be a different story altogether. On December 1, 2006, Mistico won the mask of El Hijo del Diablo before a sold-out crowd at El Auditorio de Tijuana.

Just eight weeks later, Mistico won the mask of **Sepulturero** at Arena Lopez Mateos, home of the Alianza Universal de Lucha Libre (or AULL for short) in Tlanepantla. **Sergio Hernandez**, a 14-year pro and a fixture on the local scene, turned out to be the man beneath the mask. Sepulturero broke in under the guidance of **Rocky Santana**—the head trainer at Arena Lopez Mateos—and was part of the **Killer Family** stable with **Sepulturero II**. Local periodicals, which noted the sell-out crowd for Mistico's third mask *apuesta*, also commented that Sepulturero's career might be damaged irreparably because of the loss of his mask. Interestingly, Mistico still hasn't come close to the impressive numbers his tag team partner, **El Hijo del Santo**, has racked up. In the course of his legendary career, Santo has won the masks of 30 luchadores and the hair of several more.

Mistico may be tagged as the best high-flyer in the world right now, but the pint-sized **Mascarita Sagrada** of AAA probably isn't far behind him. The current Mascarita is the third to go by that name. The first still uses the name, but has a slightly different mask. American fans were introduced to the original Mascarita when he teamed **Octagoncito** in the



El Hijo del Diablo (pictured with Lady Victoria) became another of Mistico's victims. Mistico defeated the 27-year veteran in a recent mask-vs.-mask match in Tijuana.

opener of the landmark AAA pay-per-view, *When Worlds Collide*, which aired in the U.S. in 1994. For a short stint (no pun intended), there was **Mascarita Sagrada 2000**, better known to WWE fans as **Max Mini**. The current Mascarita is a regular on the AAA circuit and a frequent rival of **Mini Abismo Negro**.

A recent trios match, with Sagrada and Mini Abismo as opposing captains, ended horribly when Mascarita came up short while attempting a flying huracanrana to Mini Abismo, who was standing outside the ring. Mascarita's tiny legs didn't hit their mark, and the mini-luchador plunged headfirst onto the arena floor. The lucha libre commission stipulates that a doctor must sit ringside for the duration of any card, which turned out to be a good requirement in this instance. A physician at ringside tended to Mascarita until he could be moved safely from the arena floor. He was rushed to a hospital and now there is talk of his impending retirement. We send our wishes for a speedy recovery to the high-flying mini-marvel. □

arena reports

We encourage promoters and readers to e-mail results to:

PWIResults@yahoo.com

Please try to utilize the exact format you see in "Arena Reports." Also, please distinguish between handicap matches and three- or four-way matches. And, when reporting the result of a handicap match indicate the number of competitors and who was the last man eliminated. Finally, please note pinfall finishes. Following these guidelines will help us greatly and make it more likely that your report will be used.

Spotlight Card of the Month

TEXAS
SAN ANTONIO—WWE Royal Rumble at AT&T Center: The Hardys defeated M-N-M. ECW champion Bobby Lashley beat Test by countout. Smackdown World champion Batista defeated Ken Kennedy. Raw World champion John Cena beat Umaga. The Undertaker won the Royal Rumble.
(01-28-07)

—Spotlight photos by George Napolitano

UNITED STATES

ALABAMA

MOBILE—WWE Smackdown at Mobile Civic Center Arena: Smackdown World champion Batista defeated Gregory Helms ... U.S. champion Chris Benoit defeated Mike Mizanin by submission ... Deuce & Domino (with Cherry) defeated Adam Evans & Wes Adams ... King Booker (with Queen Sharmell) vs. Finlay ended in a no-contest ... Joey Mercury, Johnny Nitro, & Melina beat Brian Kendrick, Paul London, & Ashley Massaro ... Kane defeated MVP by DQ ... The Undertaker won the over-the-top-rope challenge against Chris Benoit, Mike Mizanin, King Booker, Finlay, Kane, and MVP.
(01-26-07)

—Alison Curran

ARKANSAS

LITTLE ROCK—WWE Smackdown at The Altel Arena: Matt Hardy beat Joey Mercury ... William Regal, David Taylor, & MVP beat Paul London, Brian Kendrick, & Vito ... U.S. champion Chris Benoit beat Chavo Guerrero Jr. ... Deuce & Domino (with Cherry) beat Patrick Bentley & Adam Roberts ... Kane beat Mike Mizanin ... Ken Kennedy beat The Undertaker by DQ after tricking Batista into interfering ... Batista, The Undertaker, & Kane beat King Booker, Finlay, & Ken Kennedy.
(01-19-07)

—Brady Hicks

LITTLE ROCK—ECW at The Altel Arena: C.M. Punk (with Kelly Kelly) beat Matt Striker ... Marcus Cor Von beat Cassidy Riley ... Elijah Burke beat The Sandman ...

ECW champion Bobby Lashley beat Rob Van Dam and Test.
(01-16-07)

—Brady Hicks

CALIFORNIA

BAKERSFIELD—All Pro Wrestling at the Bakersfield Dome: Ricky Landell won an over-the-top-rope royal rumble ... The Ballard Brothers beat Vennis DeMarco & Chris Coloni ... Oliver John beat Ricky Landell ... Tito Aquino, Dana Lee, & J.J. Perez beat Nate Rulez, A.J. Kirsch, & Derek Sanders ... Scotty About beat Frankie Kazarian ... Mr. Prime Time beat Billy Blade and Christopher Daniels ... KAFU beat Jim Neidhart via DQ.
(01-18-07)

—Mike Lano

NEWARK—Big Time Wrestling at the Newark Pavillion: Havoc beat Chris Ryseck by pinfall ... Kimo Kanaloa & Shooter Mike Silva beat Tenacious Tim Anderson & Chico Navarro ... Light heavyweight champion Sheik Khan Abadi battled Kid Kool to a double-countout in a last-man-standing match ... Jason Styles beat heavyweight champion Dash Riprock by DQ ... L'Empereur & Jim Neidhart beat The Ballard Brothers ... Christopher Daniels beat Frankie Kazarian.
(01-19-07)

—Mike Lano

SACRAMENTO—Supreme Pro Wrestling at St. Peter's Hall: Malachi & Luster the Legend beat The Suburban Commandos in a Texas tornado match ... Mike Rayne beat D.J. Rizz and Ryan Drago in a three-way ... Timothy Thatcher beat Sir Samurai ... Seito Hayashi, Kassy Summers, & Kenny K beat El Flaco Loco, Rik Luxury, & an unknown masked man ... Oliver John beat Mr. Frost ... Jack Dalton & J.D. Bishop beat Bubba Blanchard & Wage Richon ... Paul Izadora beat Cosmic River ... Adam Thornstowe beat Virgil Flynn.
(01-21-07)

—Joshua Littell

PETALUMA—Punkslam Wrestling at Phoenix Theatre: El Flaco Loco, El Chupacabra, & Kassy Summers beat La Serpentina, Crimson Plague, & Seito Hayashi ... The Cartel beat Bubba Blanchard & Wage Richon ... The Beautiful People beat The Suburban Commandos ... Adam Thornstowe beat Timothy Thatcher ... Virgil Flynn won a number-one contender's gauntlet match ... Chlcano Flame won a three-way over Rabia and Jesus Kruze ... Heavyweight champion Sir Samurai beat Otis to retain the title.
(01-20-07)

—Joshua Littell

SAN DIEGO—Southwestern Alliance of Wrestling at the San Diego Moose Lodge: Crash Dummy pinned Mase Kerry ... Jalapeno pinned Pirate Dave ... Iron Butterfly pinned Vic Valentine ... So Cal Crazy beat Jason Sensation by submission ... Mike Rapada & Strings beat The Bulles by double pinfall.
(01-20-07)

—Jason Oliver

CONNECTICUT

PLAINFIELD—Eastern Pro Wrestling at the Town Hall: Nick Steel & Johnny Idol beat The Great Mask & Owen Graichen ... Chris Venom pinned Chase Del Monte ... Bryan & Matt Logan (with Kevin Kelly) battled Pride



The Hardys claimed the first victory of the night in their match against the very determined M-N-M. The win was especially pleasing considering the recent feud that has existed between the two tag teams, which included M-N-M's vicious beating of Matt Hardy on Smackdown in early-January.

(Dan Freitas & Brian Nunes) to a double-disqualification ... **Brandon Locke** pinned **Bryce Andrews** ... **Rocco Abruzzi** beat **Doug Summers** (with **Clip O'Reilly**) in a brass knuckles match ... **Ray Diamond** & **Bob Evans** beat **Anthony Paccito** & **Shawn Stanley** (with **Preston Patrick** & **Marshall McNeil**) to win the tag team championship ... **Thom Kane** (with **Kevin Kelly**) pinned **Tommy Mack** ... **Clip O'Reilly** beat **Sid Momentum** ... **Michael Sain** beat **Paul Lombardi** in a last-man-standing match to win the heavyweight championship. (01-26-07)

—Shawn O'Domski

FLORIDA

ORLANDO—TNA *Impact* at Universal Studios: **Abyss** defeated **Chase Stevens** ... **James Storm**, **Chris Sabin**, & **Austin Starr** defeated **Jerry Lynn**, **Rhino**, & **Senshi** when **Starr** pinned **Senshi** ... **Kurt Angle** & **Samoa Joe** defeated **Christian Cage** & **A.J. Styles**; a masked man attacked **Angle** and **Joe**, revealing himself to be **Christian's** advisor, **Scott Steiner** ... **Bobby Roode** defeated **Chase Stevens** ... **Petey Williams** pinned **Andy Douglas** ... **The Riggs Brothers** defeated the debuting **Heart Throbs** (formerly **The Heart Breakers** in **WWE**). (02-08-07)

—Brian Anstock

ORLANDO—TNA *Impact* at Universal Studios: **Austin Starr** defeated **Jerry Lynn**, **Alex Shelley**, **Jay Lethal**, and **Sonjay Dutt** ... **Robert Roode** defeated **Petey Williams** ... **A.J. Styles** vs. **Samoa Joe** ended in a no-contest. (02-01-07)

—Brian Anstock

ORLANDO—TNA *Impact* at Universal Studios: **NWA World** tag team champions **LAX** beat **Team 3D** ... **James Storm** beat **Lance Hoyt** ... **Kurt Angle** beat **A.J. Styles**. (01-18-07)

—Brian Anstock

GEORGIA

DUBLIN—GIWA at the Agricultural Center: "Mad" **Mac Davis** beat **The Masked Militant** ... "Big" **Bank Barfield** beat **Johnny Camo** ... **KI Elite** beat **Luther** and **Jason Stone** ... **Mid-State** champion **Firewalker** beat **Dyne** ... **J-Rod** and **Dave Holiday** beat tag team champions **The Axis of Evil** for the title ... **Heavyweight** champion **Velvet Jones** beat **Shawn Hunter**. (01-27-07)

—Theo Simms

ILLINOIS

CHAMPAIGN—WWE *Smackdown/ECW* at Assembly Hall: **Kane** defeated **King Booker** ... **C.M. Punk** defeated **Matt Striker** ... **Smackdown World** tag team champions **Paul London** & **Brian Kendrick** defeated **Deuce** & **Domino** ... **ECW** champion **Bobby Lashley** defeated **Kevin Thorn** ... **Finlay** defeated **The Boogeyman** ... **U.S. champion** **Chris Benoit** defeated **MVP** ... **Elijah Burke** & **Marcus Cor Von** defeated **Rob Van Dam** & **Tommy Dreamer** ... **Smackdown World** champion **Batista** defeated **Ken Kennedy**. (02-04-07)

—Bill Jensen

CARBONDALE—Underground Wrestling Society at the Bingo Hall: **High Roller** beat **Damien** by a pinfall ... **David Showers** wrestled **Bobby Bass** to a time-limit draw ... "Sweet" **Daddy Cain** beat **Kodiak** by pinfall ... **Randy Roadhouse** beat **Crazy the Clown** by a countout ... **Terry Alan** pinned **Jack Brody** to win the heavyweight title ... **Popeye Gibson** won a 14-man extreme battle royal. (01-27-07)

—Pat Rogers

ROYALTON—All-American Pro Wrestling at the Old School Gym: **Edmund McGuire** beat **Louie Dynamite** ... **The Convoy** beat **J.T. Calhon** and **Vulcan** ... **T-Bolt Baxton** beat **Kid Crazy** ... **Steven Davis** beat **Carnage** ... **Tony Storm** beat **Paul Rose** ... **Brandon Walker** beat **Ax Stevens**. (01-20-07)

—Aaron Smith

INDIANA

WEST TERRE HAUTE—CCW *WrestleBowl III* at the West Vigo Community Center: Quarterfinals: **Charlie Knight** & **A.C. Powers** beat **Shawn Clarion** & **Blake Steel** ... **Donovan Cain** & **Jason Lyte** beat **Cyclone** & **J.T. Rain** ... Semifinals: **Charlie Knight** beat **Donovan Cain** ... **Jason Lyte** beat **A.C. Powers** ... Final: **Charlie Knight** beat **Jason Lyte** ... Non-tournament matches: **Dewey Dawson** beat **Johnny Watts** ... **A.C. Powers** won an over-the-top-rope battle royal ... **Elektra Fine** beat **Paige Adams** ... **Jack Maverick** beat **heavyweight champ Toxik** in a ladder match to win the title ... **Drake Graven** beat **Smoke-A** and **Dennis Devine** in a triple-threat match. (02-09-07)

—Jake Johnstone

MADISON—AWA *Supreme Championship Wrestling* from the SCW Arena: **C.J. Popp** beat **William Valentine** and **Dewey Brown** in a three-way match to earn a shot at the **Mid-America** title ... **American Angel** pinned **Spazz** ... **Ricky Ruckus** beat **Johnny Strattlin** ... **Nic Noble** beat **Eric Draven** by DQ ... **Mid-America** champion **Damien Divine** pinned **C.J. Popp** ... **Supreme** champion **Billy Maverick** beat **Brandon Hunter** by DQ. (01-27-07)

—Shawn Sands

GREENSBURG—Wild Championship Wrestling *Outlaws* at the Parks Center: **Devan Monroe** beat **Ryan Rich** ... **Hillbilly Jed** pinned **Big John Hurtz** ... **Corona** & **Pogo** beat **The Street Punks** ... **Don Basher** pinned **Dropkick Jay** ... **Jammer** beat **ladies champion Cameron Starr** in a non-title match ... **Heavyweight** champion **Indiana Kidd Jr.** beat **Rob Ramer** ... **Apocalipz** & **Bobo Brazil Jr.** beat **The Chicago Playaz** to become the new tag team champions. (01-21-07)

—Randy Klemme

MADISON—AWA *Supreme Championship Wrestling* from the SCW Arena: **Spazz** beat



Test purposely had himself counted out after failing to affect **Lashley's** injured shoulder. But the **ECW** champion would not take such an unconvincing win. He threw **Test** back into the ring, forcing him to take his loss like a man.

American Angel by submission ... **TV** champion **C.J. Popp** beat **Lil' Loco** ... **Big & Tasty** beat **Biff Wellington III** & **Tommie Foreman** ... **C.J. Popp** & **Spazz** battled **The Regulators** to a double-countout ... **Robert Royale** beat **Eric Draven** ... **Supreme** champion **Billy Maverick** pinned **Nic Noble** in a non-title match. (01-20-07)

—Shawn Sands

IOWA

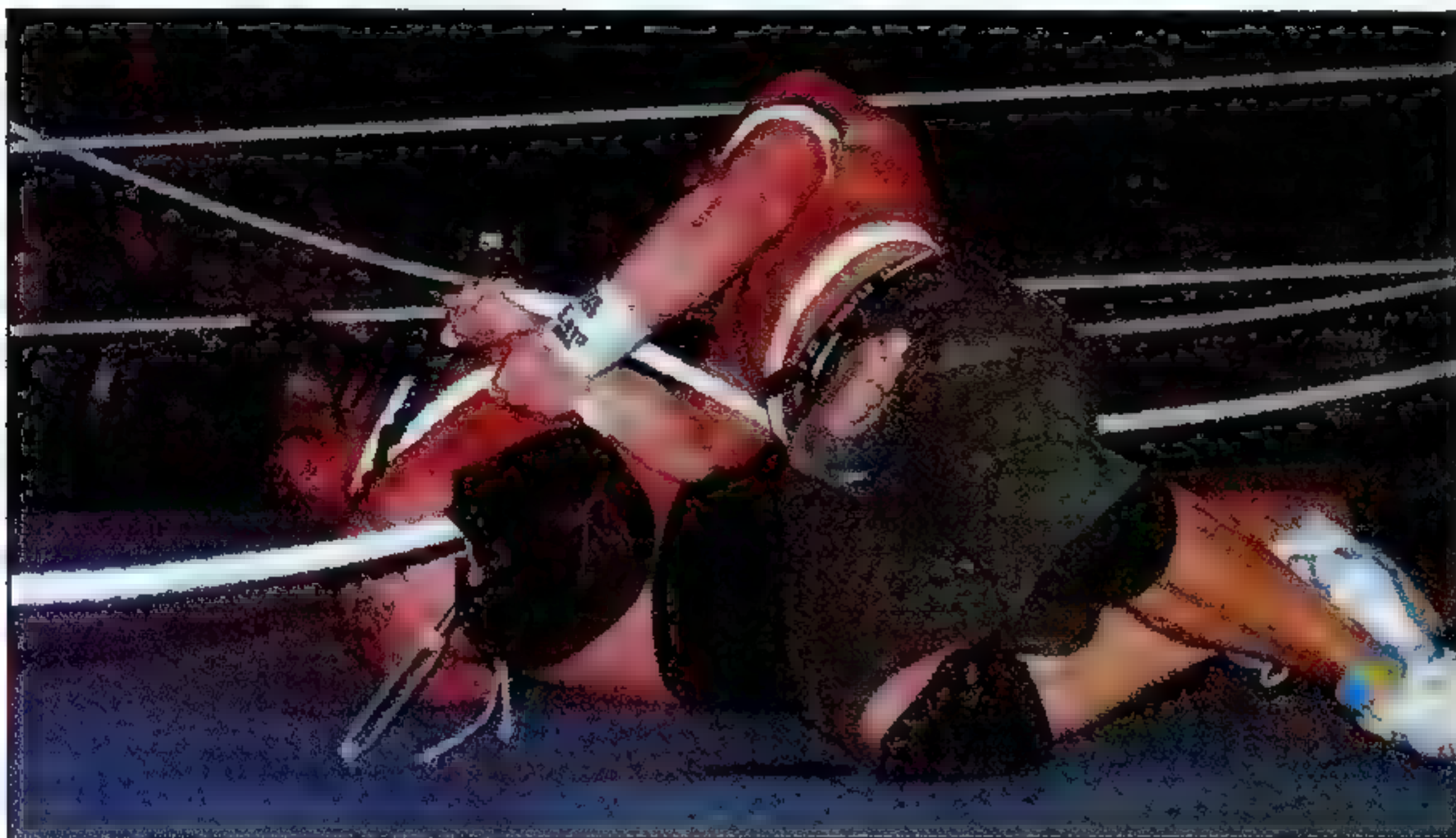
SIOUX CITY—WWE *Raw* at Tyson Events Center: **Shelton Benjamin**, **Charlie Haas**, & **Chris Masters** defeated **Cryme Tyme** & **Carlito** ... **Umaga** (with **Armando Alejandro Estrada**) defeated **Mahoney** ... **Super Crazy** (with **Mickie James**) defeated **Johnny Nitro** (with **Melina Perez**) ... **Mickie James** (with **Super Crazy**) defeated **Melina Perez** (with **Johnny Nitro**) ... **Intercontinental** champion **Jeff Hardy** defeated **Ric Flair** ... **ECW** champion **Bobby Lashley** defeated **Kenny Dykstra** ... **Shawn Michaels** defeated **Randy Orton** and **Edge** to become number-one contender for the **Raw** World title. (02-04-07)

—Brian Anstock

CEDAR RAPIDS—WWE *Raw* at U.S. Cellular Center: **Super Crazy** defeated **Chris Masters** ... **Victor Kozlov** defeated **Scotty 2 Hotty** ... **Kenny Dykstra** defeated **Jim Duggan** ... **Mickie James** defeated **Victoria** ... **The Great Khali** defeated **Eugene** ... **Cryme Tyme** defeated **The World's Greatest Tag Team** ... **Randy Orton** defeated **Carlito** ... **The Hardys** defeated **M-N-M** ... **Raw** World champion **John Cena** defeated **Umaga** via DQ. (02-03-07)

—Bill Jensen

DELTA—Impact Pro Wrestling at Delta Dome: **Project Matthew** & **Havyk** beat **Second Coming** (**Chance Cordova** & **Vin Cross**) to advance to the finals of the tag team title tour-



Armando Alejandro Estrada's cheating ways backfired when the loose ring rope that he had untied for Umaga actually helped the Raw World champion score a victory. Cena used the rope to choke out the "Samoa Bulldozer" with the STFU.

nament ... **The Inhumane Society** (T.S. Aggressor & Mr. Destiny) beat Thrillcat, The Freak, & Underdogg to advance to the finals ... **Supa Cito Kid** beat **Montoya X** to win the extreme title in a TLC match ... **Tony Sly** (with **Flav**) beat **Buck Albright** ... **A.J. Smooth** beat **Matty Star** to win the heavyweight title ... **Project Matthew** & **Havyk** beat **The Inhumane Society** to win the tag team title. (01-27-07)

—Zachary Grigg

WAUKEE—3XWrestling at Wauke Middle School: **Hunter Matthews** beat **Aaron Masterso**, **Jeremy Wyatt**, **Tyler Cook**, **Kraig Keesaman**, and **Shane Hollister** in a six-man scramble match ... **Bryce Benjamin** beat **Krotch** ... **Alison Wonderland** beat **Bryce Benjamin** ... **Danny Daniels** beat **Arik Cannon** and **Trik Davis** in a three-way match ... **Devin Carter** beat **Gage Octane** ... **The Northstar Express** beat **Ben Sailer** & **Nate Bash** to win the tag team title ... **Dan Lawrence**, **Jimmy Rockwell**, & **Ricky Kwong** beat **Casanova**, **Ryan Slade**, & **Zach Thompson** ... **Brian Ash** beat **Tony Scarpone**. (01-27-07)

—Zachary Grigg

ALGONA—Impact Pro Wrestling at The Vault: **Johny Fitness** beat **Buck Albright** ... **Second Coming** beat **Supa Cito Kid** & **Ian Wellington** ... **Kenny Backwash** beat **Mr. Destiny** ... **Tony Sly** wrestled to a draw with **Havyk** ... **Matty Starr** beat **Montoya X** and **A.J. Smooth** in a three-way to retain heavyweight title ... **Project Matthew** beat **T.S. Aggressor** in a "Trainer vs. Algona Streetfight." (01-20-07)

—Zachary Grigg

CARTER LAKE—MWA Pro Wrestling at the Carter Lake Elementary School: **Vic Victory** upset **Sean Cruz** ... **Ricky Reynolds** retained the TV title in a four-way match ... **The All Americans** beat **Vash Heartley** & **Zac James** ... **Jayson Strife** beat **Christain** ... **Tom Snow** bested **Shawn North** ... **Blade** pinned **Leslie Ray** ... **Eric Fantabulous** beat **Gauge** to

retain the heavyweight championship. (01-20-07)

—Brian Plantz

LOUISIANA

LAFAYETTE—WWE Raw at The Cajundome: **Jeff Hardy** beat **Joey Mercury** ... **Super Crazy** beat **Chris Masters** ... **The Great Khali** was the last man standing in a mini-royal rumble ... Raw World champion **John Cena** beat **Jonathan Coachman** by DQ ... **Mickie James** & **Candice Michelle** beat **Melina** & **Victoria** ... **Kenny Dykstra** beat **Carlito** (with **Torrie Wilson**) ... **Edge** beat **Shawn Michaels** with help from **Randy Orton**. (01-22-07)

—Luke McFadden

MASSACHUSETTS

SEEKONK—Action-Packed Championship Wrestling at the American Legion: **Derek Destiny** won a battle royal ... **Devine Diversity** beat **The Portuguese Warriors** to win the tag team title ... TV champion **Stooge Curly** won an elimination match also involving **Stooge Larry**, **Stooge Shemp**, **Eric Shred**, **Derek Destiny**, and **Danny Camma** ... **The Kreeper** (with **Taeler**) beat **Chris Pyro** and **A.J. Fuego** in a three-way dance ... **Freight Train** pinned "Bionic" **Dan Bidondi** ... Heavyweight champion **Johnny Nash** pinned **Derek Destiny**. (02-04-07)

—Shawn O'Domski

QUINCY—World Wrestling Alliance at the National Guard Armory: **Tommy Shields** beat **Billy B** and **Kermon** in a three-way dance ... **Jimmy Jact Cash** & **Danny Jaxx** beat **The Untouchables** ... **Shortsleeve Sampson** & **Rosie** beat **Kurt Adonis** & **Paul E. Normous** ... **Grayson Alexander**, **Ryan Waters**, **Nick Steel**, & **Vain** beat **Paul Lombardi**, **Michael Sain**, **Mike Bennett**, & **Chris Venom** ... **Josh Daniels** beat **Nick Berk** in a ladder match to win the heavyweight title ... **Billy Bax** & **Rob Eckos** beat **Shane** & **Eric Alden** ... **Dustin Rhodes** pinned **Scotty Grimes**. (02-02-07)

—Shawn O'Domski

FALL RIVER—Eastern Pro Wrestling at the Bank Street Armory: **Preston Patrick**, **Shawn**

Stanley, **Slash Sullivan**, & **Thom Kane** (with **Marshall McNeil**) beat **Steven Weiner**, **Mike Elias**, **Vain**, & **The Great Mask** ... **Alex Arion** pinned **Chris Venom** ... **Roland Martinelli** beat **Johnny Idol** in a submission match ... **Dan Freitas** & **Brian Nunes** beat **Bob Evans** & **Ray Diamond** and **Clip O'Reilly** & **Sid Momentum** in a triple-threat ladder match to win the tag team championship ... **Rocco Abruzzi** pinned **Doug Summers** in a kiss-my-foot match ... **Brandon Locke** & **Nick Steel** beat **Bryce Andrews** & **Mike Bennett** ... **Grayson Alexander** pinned **Tony Montana** ... Heavyweight champion **Michael Sain** beat **Paul Lombardi** in a steel cage match. (01-27-07)

—Shawn O'Domski

MICHIGAN

DETROIT—Pro Wrestling All-Stars at Southwest Tony's Cantina: **Shane Storm** beat **Hydra** ... **Mark Wolf** beat **The American Kickboxer** ... **The DBA** & **Jimmy Jacobs** co-won the "Southwest Stampede" battle royal ... **Roughhouse R.O.B.** beat **Sean Silver** ... **Zach Gowen** & **Fifth Element** beat **Truth Martini** & **N8 Mattson** ... **Ultramantis Black** beat **Equinox** ... **Gutter**, **Anthony Rivera**, & **Chris Hybrid** beat **Breyer Wellington**, **Vinnie Scarboni**, & **The Sicilian Playboy** ... **Jaimy Coxxx** beat **Eddie Venom** ... Midwest champion **C.J. Otis** beat **The DBA** and **Jimmy Jacobs** in a triple-threat match. (01-28-07)

—Brian Gorle

NEW JERSEY

WOODBIDGE—National Wrestling Superstars at the Elks Lodge: **Joey Rizzo** (with **Zach Starr**) beat **Chris Steeler** ... **Dark Angel** & **Bobby Piper** beat **Judas Young** & **Warrior Draven** ... **Corvis Fear** beat **Deranged** ... **The Rogue** and **Danny Demanto** wrestled to a no-contest ... **Nicky Oceans** beat **Mikey Pacifica** ... **Jim Neidhart** beat **Bison Bravado**. (01-26-07)

—Mike Terrano

WEST PATERSON—Independent Wrestling Federation at the IWF Centre: **Steve Camacho** & "Burnin'" **Mike Durnin** beat **Frank Scoleri** & **Tommy Trouble** ... **Justin Corino** beat heavyweight champ **Tony Torres** in a non-title amateur wrestling exhibition ... **Franciz** beat **Nick Gregory** and **Jason Roberts** ... Tag team champs **Outlaw O'Brien** & **Aaron Stride** beat **Dan Marquez** & **Rey Calitri** ... **Travis Blake** pinned **Chris Steeler** to win the American title ... **Travis Blake** & **Franciz** beat **Kevin Knight** & **Bonecrusher Sampson** by DQ. (01-21-07)

—Shawn O'Domski

VINELAND—Damn That's Wrestling at Landis Intermediate School: **Chio Frost** pinned **Angel Gonzalez** ... **Joey Spade** beat **Breaker Morant** ... **Crazed** pinned **Big Louie** ... **Patch** pinned **White Lotus** ... **The Bad Boy** beat **Tony Reyes** ... **Doink the Clown** pinned **The Bad Boy** ... **J.D. Smooth** beat **Vinnie the Fixxer** ... **Tommy Force** pinned **Tommy Golden** in a hardcore match. (01-20-07)

—Shawn O'Domski

NORTH CAROLINA

WADESBORO—World Class Extreme Wrestling at the Harvest Ministries Center: Cletus Bass & D.Z. Hyde beat Big Daddy & Damian Kage ... Corey Edsel beat The Russian ... Josh Hunter & Rayne beat Tre G & Craven Slater by DQ ... Tommy Vandal beat Billy Blade and Ostgard to win the vacant extreme title ... Boogie Woogie McBride beat Sean Altly ... Hangtime (with Nikita) beat Tito Rain ... Tag champions Tyron Knox & Ali Steele beat The Dawsons ... Aaron Devil beat Rick Link in a bounty match. (01-27-07)

—Texas Patton

GOLDSBORO—Universal Wrestling Council at the YMCA: Sydye pinned Kimo ... Luke Montsinger beat Yuk ... U.S. champion Ricco Rage defeated Xavier Cross and Antonio Marinara in a triple-threat match ... The All-American Athletics beat Kid Casanova & Jesse Jordan by submission ... Xavier Cross pinned El Mariachi ... Skull-O-Mania went to a double-DQ with Luke Montsinger and Kimo ... Scotty Matthews & Nemesis beat champion Willie Watts & Will. (01-20-07)

—Thomas Loftin

STEM—Gimmicks Only Underground Grappling Entertainment at Stem Fire Hall: Jaheem the Dream eliminated Wallabee Joe last to win the "Redneck Rumble" ... Dick Foley beat Wallabee Joe (with Felicia O) ... Gluteus Maximus beat Mr. Huxtable ... Jaheem the Dream beat Playa De Pimp ... The Urban Legends (Luther Thesz & Leroy Zbyszko) beat Seymour & Peter Snott ... Traller Park Heat beat Scab (with Count Grog) to win the heavyweight title. (01-20-07)

—Mike Lano

OHIO

CLEVELAND—Wrestling All Stars Promotion at Turner's Hall: J.T. Lightning beat The Aftermath ... Cruiserweight champ Barry Saggitatious beat T-Dawg, T.J. Dynamite, Hobo Joe, and Akira in a five-man scramble ... Billy Taylor beat Marlon Fontaine ... Puerto Rican Sensation beat Johnny Beef by DQ ... The Black Militia beat Gregory Irons & Matthew Justice ... Brandon X & Eastside Eddie beat The Abercrombie Boyz ... Sheik Abdul Hassan beat Spectre ... Tag team champions Klub X-treme beat Flawless & Kano ... TV champion Luis Diamante beat Johnny Gargano ... Universal champion Durdy Sanchez beat Shaggy ... Hardcore champion Johnny Blaze beat Hellrazor ... Shawn Blaze won a 30-man "WrestleBowf" battle royal. (01-27-07)

—Johnny James

GIRARD—Championship Wrestling Experience at the Holiday Inn Metroplex: Jigsaw beat Shiima Xion & Marion Fontaine ... Patrick Hayes beat Apex Allen Amazing ... Johnny Gargano beat Judas Young ... The Gambino Brothers beat Klub X-treme ... Vendetta beat Jason Gory ... Nobutaka Moribe beat Arik Cannon by DQ ... Preston Steele beat Larry Sweeney ... Faith In Nothing beat The North Star

Express ... Matt Cross beat Josh Abercrombie. (01-21-07)

—Johnny James

SOUTH AMHERST—Mega Championship Wrestling at South Amherst Community Center: Jeff Jevic beat Billy Taylor ... Christian Vaughn beat Louis St. Clair, Johnny Beef, and lightweight champion Shawn Blaze to win the title ... Robby Starr beat Chuck Brody ... Da Munchies & Lexi Lane beat J.T. Lightning, Jason Bane, & Jessicka Havoc ... T.J. Dynamite beat DuBlave ... Faith In Nothing beat Marion Fontaine & Jason Bane ... Tag team champions Los Scrubs beat Klub X-treme ... U.S. champion Chris Kole & brass knuckles champion Brandon X wrestled to a draw in a title-unification match. (01-20-07)

—Johnny James

OKLAHOMA

LAWTON—Impact Zone Wrestling at The Salvation Army Boys and Girls Club: Cruiserweight champion Mitch Carter beat Matt Garza ... Impact division champion Ryan Davidson beat Michael Faith ... Thomas Rumsfeld beat Jeff Starchild ... Heavyweight champion Michael Barry beat John Zorthos ... Brandon Bishop beat Gary Tool and Brad Michaels in a handicap match ... Tag team champions Seth Shai & Mace beat Tyler Bateman & Kenny Campbell in a no-DQ match ... John O'Malley beat Aaron Neil. (01-27-07)

—Kokina Lynn

OREGON

McMINNVILLE—The National Guard Armory: A.T. Flash & The Player beat Sir Latte & Flaming McD ... Kimo & Chico Navarro beat Cosmic River & Christopher Ryseck ... Mega Boy, Principa Zarrack, & Durango Kid beat La Bista, Corazon de Oro, & Chilango in a best two-out-of-three falls lucha libre trios match ... Shane Mathews beat J.B. Luce ... D-Lo Brown beat Count Black Pearl and Helfyre in a triple-threat match ... Kamala beat L'Empereur ... Rikishi beat Wagé Reichton ... New Jack beat Terry Bull in a loser-leaves-town match inside a steel cage. (01-26-07)

—Ronald B. Michaels

GRESHAM—New Revolution Wrestling at the Recreation Center: "Hearthrob" Erik Hanson beat Christopher Payne ... Cameron Starr beat Thrash Kincaid ... Dash Venture (with Derek Drex) defeated Brokejaw ... Ritchie Magnett pinned Mike Santiago ...

Skag Rollins beat The Freak ... Quiz beat Nate the Great ... Ritchie Magnett won a 10-man battle royal to become the number-one contender for the Pacific Coast championship. (01-26-07)

—Rachael Marie

PENNSYLVANIA

McKEESPORT—Pro Wrestling Express at the Jacob Woll Pavillion: Blue Dragon pinned Amir Al Jahari ... Devil Bhudakahn beat Scottie Gash to become the new Three Rivers champion ... Elite beat Sean Dahmer ... Heavyweight champion Chris Taylor beat Chris LeRusso. (02-03-07)

—Mike McBeth

McKEESPORT—Atlas Wrestling Company at the Jacob Woll Pavillion: Scott Venom beat Bigg ... Brandon K beat Crusher Hansen ... Dash Bennett beat Dan Miles and Apollyon in a triple-threat match ... Scott Venom pinned Brandon K to become the first heavyweight champion. (02-03-07)

—Mike McBeth

ALLENTOWN—World Xtreme Wrestling at Mountainville Hall: Jana, Cha Cha, Ariel, and Cindy Rogers co-won a battle royal for entry into the main event ... Alicia pinned Miss Dixie ... Monique pinned Discord (with Acid Zero) ... Cindy Rogers pinned Cha Cha ... Annie Social pinned Tara Murphy ... Kacee Carlisle beat Jana by submission ... In a reverse elimination match, Ariel won the first fall to be named number-one contender to the women's title ... Jana & Cindy Rogers won the second and third falls, respectively, to become new women's tag team champions. (01-27-07)

—Eric Shaffer



Carlito was victim number six of The Great Khali, who eliminated seven competitors in a row from the Royal Rumble as entrant number 28. Khali's gigantic size made him a favorite to win WWE's annual event.



Shawn Michaels was expected to take the win at the Royal Rumble—and he almost did. But after 10 minutes of one-on-one battle with “The Dead Man,” Michaels was eliminated, earning The Undertaker a world title shot at WrestleMania 23.

YORK—Pro Wrestling Entertainment at the York Expo Center: Los Ice Creams & Hydra beat Soldier Ant, Worker Ant, & Equinox ... Hyjinx pinned “Jackpot” Jimmy Jessup (with Max Speede and Ginger Cunningham) ... Commander Samuel A. Wellington beat Cowboy Dunk ... Kage beat Calvin McGrath ... Tag team champions Jey Graham & Shane Valentine wrestled Icarus & Gran Akuma to a draw in a non-title match ... PWE champion Mike Quackenbush pinned Hallowicked. (01-27-07)

—Timothy A. Walker

BUTLER—Far North Wrestling at the Days Inn: C.J. Sensation beat Jason Cage ... Sebastian beat The Milwaukee Mauler ... The Bump ‘n’ Ugliers beat Private Twinkie & Big Cat Lemur by DQ ... Calvin McGrath beat Michael Blade ... Brodie Lee beat Lord Zoltan ... Seth James beat Big Lenny ... Cruiserweight champion Shiima Xion beat Nobutaka Morite ... The Gentleman’s Club (Chris Cronus & Scott Fowler) upset Demolition Ax and Nitro. (01-26-07)

—Matt Kerr

TENNESSEE

KINGSPORT—Championship Wrestling at the Civic Auditorium: Ryan Dookie beat Josh Crawford ... Sarah Lynn & Moe Jenkins beat Brian Compton & Eric Steele ... E.Z. Money beat Tobias & Mathias Grimm ... Junior heavyweight champion Brad Thomas beat Allen King ... Adam York & Thorn beat J.V. Insanity & The Kyd ... Beau James vs. Bobby Eaton went to a no-contest ... Ray Idol, Chris Richards, & Wayne Adkins beat Tony Givens, Robbie Cassidy, & Nick Hammonds by DQ. (01-27-07)

—Chris Long

TEXAS

HUMBLE—Texas All-Star Wrestling from the Humble Bingo Hall: Bobby 2 Badd beat Chip Dumass ... Justin Blaze beat Jed-Lo ... The Gimps beat Dylan Starr & Nasty Nick ... T-Bone beat VooDoo by disqualification ... Bubba Lee Travis pinned El Dragon Rapido ... Samoa Joe beat ZenZen. (02-04-07)

—Mike Garcia

SAN ANTONIO—Texas Wrestling Entertainment’s Star Warz at the Alzafar Shrine Temple: Windwalker beat Ricky Rhodes ... Doink beat RBG ... Rudy Russo beat Robert Evans and Aaron Eagle in a triple-threat match ... TV champion Brett Thunder beat Skitzo to retain the TV title ... ACW heavyweight champion Showtime Summers beat Skylar Skelley ... Heavyweight champion Mike Foxx beat Bio-Hazard ... Tag team champions The Children of Pain (Darin Childs & Jacob Ladder) beat The Dog Pound (Bigg Dogg & Rexx Reed) in a no-DQ death match. (02-04-07)

—Barry Yount

ARLINGTON—Professional Championship Wrestling Full Throttle at PCW Arena: Wally Darkmon beat Li Fang ... Tag team champions Aaron Eagle & Robert Evans beat Nobe Bryant & Brandon Collins ... Stephen Murphy beat Tarantula ... Franco D’Angelo beat Mad Dog ... Shadow (Lance Hoyt) beat Canyon by DQ ... Action Jackson beat B.J. Turner ... TV champion Luke Bronson beat Mike Foxx. (02-03-07)

—Rob Moore

HOUSTON—WWE Smackdown at The Toyota Center: Chuck Palumbo defeated Sho Funaki ... Boris Alexiev defeated Jamie Noble ... Chris Benoit defeated Finlay to retain the U.S. title ... Deuce & Domino (with Cherry) defeated Smackdown World tag team champions Brian Kendrick & Paul London (with Ashley Massaro) in a non-title match ... Ken Kennedy defeated Vito ... Mike Mizanin defeated Matt Hardy. (02-02-07)

—Luke McFadden

HOUSTON—ECW at The Toyota Center: Matt Striker defeated C.M. Punk ... Hardcore Holly defeated Rob Van Dam ... ECW champion Bobby Lashley defeated Test. (01-30-07)

—Alison Curran

DALLAS—WWE Raw at The American Airlines Center: World’s Greatest Tag Team (Charlie Haas & Shelton Benjamin) beat Cryme Tyme (Shad Gaspard & JTG) ... Melina defeated Maria Kanellis to become number-one contender to the women’s title ... Umaga (with Armando Alejandro Estrada) defeated Val Venis ... Super Crazy & Carlito (with Torrie Wilson) defeated Chris Masters

& Kenny Dykstra ... The Great Khali defeated Intercontinental champion Jeff Hardy by countout ... John Cena & Shawn Michaels defeated Edge & Randy Orton to win the Raw World tag team title. (01-29-07)

—Brian Anstock

ARLINGTON—Professional Championship Wrestling Full Throttle at PCW Arena: Luke Bronson beat Wally Darkmon ... James Johnson beat cruiserweight champion Brett Barnes by DQ ... Brandon Collins beat Robert Evans ... Tejano Kid beat SB-1 ... Mace Malone and Stephen Murphy wrestled to a no-contest ... Wally Darkmon & Mace Malone beat Nobe Bryant & Stephen Murphy ... Shadow beat Shawn Stasiak. (01-27-07)

—Rob Moore

PORT NECHES—Gulf Coast Power Pro Wrestling from the National Guard Armory: Tony Vega pinned Eddie Lee ... Max Muscles beat Shawn Stern ... ZenZen vs. Chris James ended in a no-contest ... The Fu Man Kru beat The Latin Assassins ... Jared Steele beat Cow Dog by DQ. (01-27-07)

—J.A. Allen

SAN ANTONIO—River City Wrestling at Bellaire Baptist Church Gym: Gemini beat Andrew Dalton ... Hotstuff Hernandez beat B.J. Turner ... Quinten Allen beat Franco D’Angelo ... Mike Foxx beat Sicodelico Jr. ... Joey Spector beat J.T. LaMotta ... Scott McKenzie & Messiah beat Don Juan & Chris Marval to win the tag team championship ... Heavyweight champion Ikaika beat Mike Dell. (01-27-07)

—Barry Yount

UTAH

SALT LAKE CITY—Ultra Championship Wrestling at the Fight Coliseum: Ultra-X title tournament, semifinals: Kid Cade pinned Jeff Orcut ... Devan Payne beat Paco ... In the final, Paco beat Cade for the vacant title ... Khan Kussion beat Guerrero Azteca in a table match ... Kid Cade pinned Devan ... Tag team champions High Risk (Derrick Jannetty & Radical Ricky) beat Dallas Murdock & Cassidy ... Mach Martinez pinned Alex Brady ... David Young pinned heavyweight champion Tristan Gallo to become the new champion. (01-20-07)

—Cameron Nielsen

WASHINGTON

BUCKLEY—AWA Washington Pinnacle Pro Wrestling at the Armory: The Blue Chippers beat Rollin’ 2 Deep ... Memphis Raines beat “Outlaw” Wade Hess ... Mask Air Raid beat Mike Santiago & Kevin Cook ... Christopher Rysek beat El Phantasma ... Larkin O’Shea & Kyle O’Reilly beat Moondog Slim & R.J. the Mall Security Guard ... Tag team champions Aaron Bolo & Twist beat Larkin O’Shea & Kyle O’Reilly (with Mr. Phil Goode) ... Heavyweight champion Laramie Lexow beat Seth Knight. (01-27-07)

—Brian Barr

between falls

PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED welcomes readers' comments on any of our stories or columns.

Send letters to:
BETWEEN FALLS Box 1148, Ft. Washington, PA 19034
Or you can e-mail your comments to
prowrestlingillustrated@yahoo.com

ANOTHER SWITCH



Since the February 2007 issue went to press, much has changed in the world of Smackdown. This caused our feature story entitled "Trading Places: How Booker Became Batista... And How Batista Became Booker!" to receive a lot of feedback following Batista's title win at Survivor Series. "King Booker is finally dethroned!" said Akron, Ohio, native Dolores Bundchen. "Now Booker and Batista can switch back to their rightful roles."

Roy Feinstein of Oak Hill, Alabama, shared Dolores' sentiment: "I was beginning to wonder if Smackdown was doomed to a long-term reign of King Booker, but, sure enough, Batista came to the rescue. Granted, it wasn't the most exciting of title changes, but a win is a win."

There was an opposing argument, however, from Trevor Curin of Augusta, Missouri. "I'm a huge Batista fan, and I'd been waiting for months for Batista to come back; I was sure he'd reclaim his title immediately in extraordinary fashion, but that Survivor Series match was a total letdown."

A DIFFERENT NOMINEE

I don't normally write letters to magazines, but I thought I'd write to let you know who I thought deserved Wrestler of the Year. John Cena? Hell, no! Samoa Joe? Nah. Not him either. I'm putting my vote in for Homicide. If *PWI's* "Achievement Award" voting period had extended past December 1, Homicide's Ring of Honor title victory over the seemingly unbeatable Bryan Danielson would have put him in the running.

Even before that important win, Homicide defended ROH against the Combat Zone Wrestling invasion, and thwarted the diabolical plans of Jim Cornette, The Briscoe Brothers, Adam Pearce, and Steve Corino. Of course, Homicide did much of this while defending the NWA World tag team title with Hernandez.

What has John Cena done? Oh, yeah. He's wasted his time feuding with K-Fed!

BUZZ TIPPETT
gailkimsmark@yahoo.com

TNA NEEDS TO STOP!

TNA has gone too far. I like watching TNA. The X division is great. But, TNA, please stop trying to get Vince McMahon, Paul Heyman, and DX to give you the time of day. Okay, I understand Rhino is mad that ECW was brought back. Hell, a lot of us are. It's not the same. But trying to get the attention of McMahon or Heyman by criticizing ECW on TV is just plain stupid.

The James Gang (or should I say VKM?) needs to stop with the whole DX-hater thing. I mean, the only reason B.G. James and Kip

James were in DX was because Shawn Michaels got hurt and had to sit out for four years, and the WWF needed to push Triple-H. Also, you guys are giving WWE free TV time every time you talk about them.

Then there's Kurt Angle. What makes me most angry about him is that WWE gave Angle a good farewell. They didn't make him look bad at all. But what does he do? He bad-mouths Vince. Mr. McMahon gave him all the respect in the world and Angle spit on it because Vince told him the truth. Face it, Angle: In pro wrestling, your gold medal



Homicide outshines much of the other talent that was in the running for *PWI's* Wrestler of the Year Award, according to reader Buzz Tippet. Tippet says Homicide has more than proven himself, unlike John Cena, who's been spending his days feuding with a celebrity ex-husband.



We were a little hard on Smackdown's announce team in our "Four-Way Faceoff" in the January 2007 issue of *PWI*—at least in the eyes of reader Jeremy Simpson, who prefers JBL and Michael Cole to Don West, or even Jerry Lawler.

doesn't mean a damn thing.

Let's face the facts. Vince McMahon could put another wrestling program on Thursday nights or just buy out TNA altogether. Vince is never gonna give you or your wrestlers the time of day on the air. So, on behalf of Vince McMahon, Triple-H, Shawn Michaels, and WWE, we would like to thank you for the free advertising.

JAMES REDINBAUGH
Spanaway, WA

FED UP WITH WWE

Kevin Federline is ruining WWE. Granted, Umaga and Johnny Nitro played a big part in beating down John Cena, enabling K-Fed to score a cheap victory over him. Think about it: K-Fed pinned the Raw World champion! Now that Cena is in the worst state of his career, I am actually looking forward to seeing Umaga become the champ at some point and Cena returning to mid-card status.

On the other side of the wrestling world, TNA is really picking up. I have been very impressed with the action over the past few weeks. I think Kurt Angle is at his best, and Tomko has looked very good inside the ring.

This is just another example of how WWE squanders opportunities and TNA makes the most of them.

JOHN DEANE
Preston, England

MODEL SHOW?

I was a big wrestling fan through the "Monday Night War," but I have lost my way over the past several years. With the mild resurgence of TNA, I have found myself getting back into wrestling. I have never been a fan of WWE. I was always a WCW guy, but I decided to give the Raw product a try recently.

One question immediately came to mind: When did wrestling become full of Abercrombie & Fitch models? Most of them have little to no ring ability. There is not a second- or third-generation wrestler to be found in the women's division. It seems like many of them were probably physically fit models that WWE have trained to wrestle. I miss the old days, when wrestlers were judged by their abilities and not on appearance.

It's quite telling that WWE's most gifted athlete, Chris Benoit, is on Smackdown, its second-rated show.

AARON FIALA
aaronisc@hotmail.com

A REEVALUATION

I thought your evaluation of wrestling's four major brands in the January 2007 issue ("Raw vs. Smackdown vs. ECW vs. TNA: Four-Way Faceoff!") was a great concept, although some of the matchups were rather odd.

Why was Jeff Hardy ranked number two for Raw? Is it because he's the Intercontinental champion? If so, then Ken Kennedy, who was the United States champion when you went to press, should have been number two for Smackdown.

And I was shocked by your comparison of the announcers. Smackdown was ranked last. John Bradshaw Layfield is a refreshing addition to the announce table. I would rather have him on color than the annoying Don West, the played-out Jerry Lawler, or even Tazz. If Layfield ever becomes a full-time wrestler again, there is always Josh Matthews, who gained his experience on *Velocity*. Michael Cole isn't nearly as bad as you make him out to be either. *PWI* might have ranked Smackdown last in announcing, but, for me, it's clearly the gold standard.

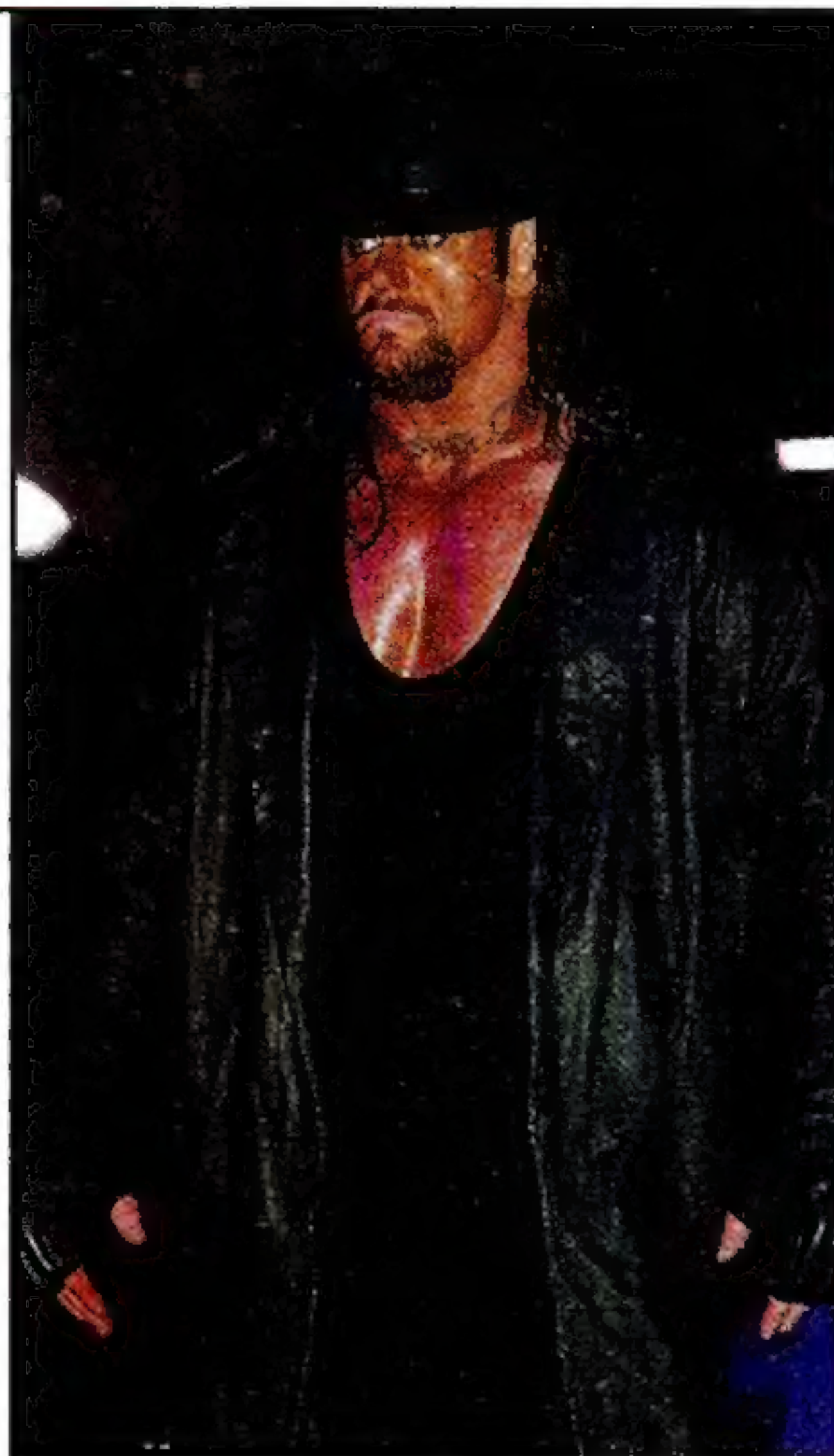
JEREMY SIMPSON
zeosilver@hotmail.com

PWI official ratings

For period ended February 8, 2007

TOP 10

- 1 JOHN CENA**
260, West Newbury, MA
(1) Raw World champion
- 2 BATISTA**
318, Washington, DC
(2) Smackdown World champion
- 3 BOBBY LASHLEY**
255, Topeka, KS
(4) ECW champion
- 4 CHRISTIAN CAGE**
225, Toronto, Ontario
(-) NWA World champion
- 5 HOMICIDE**
220, Brooklyn, NY
(-) Ring of Honor champion
- 6 HIROSHI TANAHASHI**
227, Ogaki, Japan
(6) IWGP heavyweight champion
- 7 THE UNDERTAKER**
304, Dallas, TX
(-) No. 1 contender: SD World title
- 8 SHAWN MICHAELS**
217, San Antonio, TX
(-) No. 1 contender: Raw World title
- 9 MINORU SUZUKI**
220, Yokohama, Japan
(8) All Japan Triple Crown champion
- 10 KURT ANGLE**
233, Pittsburgh, PA
(10) No. 1 contender: NWA World title



The Undertaker

TAG TEAMS

- 1 HOMICIDE & HERNANDEZ**
Combined weight: 495 pounds
(3) NWA World tag team champions
- 2 JOHN CENA & SHAWN MICHAELS**
Combined weight: 477 pounds
(-) Raw World tag team champions
- 3 PAUL LONDON & BRIAN KENDRICK**
Combined weight: 380 pounds
(2) Smackdown World tag team champions
- 4 DEUCE & DOMINO**
Combined weight: 497 pounds
(-) No. 1 contenders: SD World tag team title
- 5 SHELTON BENJAMIN & CHARLIE HAAS**
Combined weight: 480 pounds
(-) No. 1 contenders: Raw World tag team title
- 6 CODY RUNNELS & SHAWN SPEARS**
Combined weight: 467 pounds
(8) OVW Southern tag team champions
- 7 MATT & JEFF HARDY**
Combined weight: 425 pounds
(6) No. 2 contenders: Raw World tag team title
- 8 CHRISTOPHER DANIELS & MATT SYDAL**
Combined weight: 387 pounds
(10) Ring of Honor tag team champions
- 9 RANDY ORTON & EDGE**
Combined weight: 485 pounds
(1) No. 3 contenders: Raw World tag team title
- 10 TEAM 3D**
Combined weight: 521 pounds
(-) No. 1 contenders: NWA World tag team title

WWE RAW

Raw World Champion:

JOHN CENA

(C) 260, West Newbury, MA

- 1—SHAWN MICHAELS**
(5) 217, San Antonio, TX
- 2—JEFF HARDY**
(1) 212, Cameron, NC
- 3—UMAGA**
(7) 348, Isle of Samoa
- 4—EDGE**
(6) 240, Toronto, Ontario
- 5—KENNY DYKSTRA**
(-) 234, Worcester, MA
- 6—THE GREAT KHALI**
(-) 408, Bombay, India
- 7—CARLITO**
(8) 220, San Juan, Puerto Rico
- 8—SUPER CRAZY**
(-) 215, Mexico City, Mexico
- 9—CHRIS MASTERS**
(-) 270, Santa Monica, CA
- 10—RANDY ORTON**
(4) 245, St. Louis, MO

WWE SMACKDOWN

Smackdown World Champion:

BATISTA

(C) 318, Washington, DC

- 1—THE UNDERTAKER**
(5) 304, Dallas, TX
- 2—CHRIS BENOIT**
(3) 224, Edmonton, Alberta
- 3—KEN KENNEDY**
(1) 246, Minneapolis, MN
- 4—KING BOOKER**
(2) 250, Houston, TX
- 5—FINLAY**
(6) 230, Belfast, Ireland
- 6—KANE**
(-) 326, St. Louis, MO
- 7—CHAVO GUERRERO JR.**
(4) 210, El Paso, TX
- 8—THE MIZ**
(-) 210, Parma, OH
- 9—DAIVARI**
(-) 203, Minneapolis, MN
- 10—GREGORY HELMS**
(10) 210, Raleigh, NC

ECW

ECW Champion:

BOBBY LASHLEY

(C) 255, Topeka, KS

- 1—C.M. PUNK**
(2) 210, Chicago, IL
- 2—ROB VAN DAM**
(1) 237, Battle Creek, MI
- 3—HARDCORE HOLLY**
(8) 249, Mobile, AL
- 4—SABU**
(5) 220, Bombay, India
- 5—TEST**
(3) 285, Toronto, Ontario
- 6—ELIJAH BURKE**
(-) 230, Jacksonville, FL
- 7—KEVIN THORN**
(-) 270, Memphis, TN
- 8—MARCUS COR VON**
(-) 275, Saginaw, MI
- 9—MAHONEY**
(7) 361, Nutley, NJ
- 10—TOMMY DREAMER**
(-) 265, Yonkers, NY

TNA

NWA World Champion:

CHRISTIAN CAGE

(3) 225, Toronto, Ontario

- 1—KURT ANGLE**
(1) 233, Pittsburgh, PA
- 2—ABYSS**
(C) 295, parts unknown
- 3—STING**
(4) 255, Venice Beach, CA
- 4—CHRIS SABIN**
(8) 207, Detroit, MI
- 5—SAMOA JOE**
(5) 270, Isle of Samoa
- 6—RHINO**
(7) 275, Detroit, MI
- 7—JAMES STORM**
(-) 225, Franklin, TN
- 8—AUSTIN STARR**
(-) 202, Milwaukee, WI
- 9—JERRY LYNN**
(-) 216, Minneapolis, MN
- 10—A.J. STYLES**
(6) 202, Gainesville, GA

Top 10 and Tag Team ratings are based on won-lost records for the past month, quality of opposition, and inherent skill of each wrestler or team. These ratings are compiled by the magazine's editorial board. All other ratings are based on the official current positions of challengers to the top title in each category; certain titleholders receive an automatic spot in the ratings. The number in parentheses indicates a wrestler's position in that category last issue; (-) indicates that the wrestler was not rated in that category last issue, while (C) indicates the wrestler was champion in that category last issue.

AMERICAN WRESTLING ASSOCIATION: Champion—Steve Corino; 1—Takao Omori; 2—Ric Converse; 3—Aaron Aguilera; 4—Ricky Landell; 5—Shinjiro Otani; 6—Mark Jindrak; 7—Dysfunction; 8—Tully Blanchard; 9—Greg Valentine; 10—Kaimana.

AWA/CWF MID-ATLANTIC: Champion—Joey Silvia; 1—Ric Converse; 2—Steve Green; 3—Otto Schwanz; 4—Rob McBride; 5—Brass Munkey; 6—Kamikaze Kid; 7—Gemini Kid; 8—Jesse Ortega; 9—Mitch Connor; 10—Tank Lawson.

AWA SUPREME CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING: Champion—Billy Maverick; 1—Damien Divine; 2—Ricky Ruckus; 3—C.J. Popp; 4—Eric Draven; 5—Brandon Hunter; 6—William Valentine; 7—Spazz; 8—Mike Trusty; 9—Johnny Stratlin; 10—Dewey Brown.

CHAMPIONSHIP PRO WRESTLING: Champion—Leslie Leatherman; 1—Hyjinx; 2—Jake Davis; 3—Bob Keller; 4—Switchblade; 5—Bill Bain; 6—Brian Johnson; 7—Griffen; 8—King Kaluha; 9—The Patriot; 10—Johnny Graham.

CAROLINA WRESTLING ENTERTAINMENT: Champion—Scotty Matthews; 1—Aaron Devil; 2—Bounty Hunter; 3—D.J. P Roc; 4—Rick Link; 5—Jaheem the Dream; 6—Leroy Greene; 7—Tre G.; 8—D.Z. Hyde; 9—Hangtime; 10—Sean Atty.

NATIONAL WRESTLING LEAGUE: Champion—Gutterboy; 1—Samu; 2—Ian Decay; 3—John Rambo; 4—Professor Egon Ecton; 5—OGB; 6—Doink the Clown; 7—Jim Neidhart; 8—Blackhawk; 9—The Patriot; 10—Brandon Scott.

NORTHEAST WRESTLING: Champion—Xavier; 1—A.J. Styles; 2—Abyss; 3—Christian Cage; 4—Jay Lethal; 5—Jerry Lawler; 6—Josh Daniels; 7—Romeo Roselli; 8—Jeff Starr; 9—Kurt Adonis; 10—Antonio Thomas.

PRO WRESTLING ENTERTAINMENT: Champion—Mike Quackenbush; 1—Hallowicked; 2—Glen Osbourne; 3—Shane Valentine; 4—The Patriot; 5—Jey Graham; 6—Gran Akuma; 7—Calvin McGrath; 8—Hyjinx; 9—Shane Shadows; 10—Jimmy Jessup.

RING WARS CAROLINA: Champion—Hangtime; 1—Eddie Brown; 2—Aaron Devil; 3—Tre G.; 4—Styxx; 5—Tito Rain; 6—D.Z. Hyde; 7—Josh Hunter; 8—Cletus Bass; 9—Johnny Aries; 10—Naudia.

RIVER CITY WRESTLING: Champion—Ikaika; 1—Mike Dell; 2—Hotstuff Hernandez; 3—Sicodelico Jr.; 4—Messiah; 5—Don Juan; 6—Chris Marval; 7—Andy Dalton; 8—Joey Spector; 9—B.J. Turner; 10—Masada.

UNDERGROUND WRESTLING SOCIETY: Champion—Terry Alan; 1—Jack Brody; 2—Popeye Gibson; 3—High Roller; 4—Randy Roadhouse; 5—David Showers; 6—Maddawg; 7—Crazy the Clown; 8—Bobby Bass; 9—Damien; 10—Sweet Daddy Cain.

WORLD CLASS EXTREME WRESTLING: Champion—Vacant; 1—Tommy Vandal; 2—Hangtime; 3—Corey Edsel; 4—Aaron Devil; 5—Josh Hunter; 6—Tre G.; 7—Billy Blade; 8—Ali Steele; 9—D.Z. Hyde; 10—Craven Slater.

RING OF HONOR

ROH Champion:

HOMICIDE

(9) 220, Brooklyn, NY

1—DELIRIOUS

(6) 192, parts unknown

2—JIMMY RAVE

(10) 175, Atlanta, GA

3—SAMOA JOE

(1) 270, Isle of Samoa

4—RODERICK STRONG

(3) 205, Tampa, FL

5—NIGEL MCGUINNESS

(2) 220, London, England

6—AUSTIN ARIES

(4) 202, Milwaukee, WI

7—CHRIS HERO

(-) 211, Dayton, OH

8—JAY BRISCOE

(-) 205, Laurel, DE

9—ROCKY ROMERO

(-) 175, Havana, Cuba

10—DAVEY RICHARDS

(5) 202, Othello, WA

OVW

OVW Champion:

PAUL BIRCHALL

(5) 281, Surrey, England

1—BORIS ALEXIEV

(-) 255, Moscow, Russia

2—CHET THE JET

(3) 230, Buffalo, NY

3—EDDIE KRAVEN

(-) 205, New York, NY

4—JACOB DUNCAN

(C) 335, Louisville, KY

5—MIKE KRUEL

(7) 210, New York, NY

6—SETH SKYFIRE

(1) 195, Birmingham, AL

7—CHARLES EVANS

(2) 285, Third Ward, TX

8—DEVON DRISCOLL

(4) 220, Louisville, KY

9—SHAWN SPEARS

(6) 235, Louisville, KY

10—STEVE LEWINGTON

(10) 225, Wokingham, England

JAPAN

1—HIROSHI TANAHASHI

(2) 227, Ogaki, Japan
IWGP heavyweight champion

2—MINORU SUZUKI

(3) 220, Yokohama, Japan
All Japan Triple Crown champion

3—MITSU HARU MISAWA

(-) 228, Ashikaga, Japan
GHC heavyweight champion

4—NAOMICHI MARUFUJI

(1) 211, Saitama, Japan

5—YUJI NAGATA

(-) 228, Tokyo, Japan

6—SATOSHI KOJIMA

(5) 243, Tokyo, Japan

7—HIROYOSHI TENZAN

(6) 270, Tokyo, Japan

8—TAKESHI MORISHIMA

(-) 297, Tokyo, Japan

9—MINORU

(-) 198, Komaki, Japan
IWGP jr. heavyweight champion

10—DON FUJI

(-) 225, Tokyo, Japan

MEXICO

1—MISTICO

(1) 177, Mexico City, Mexico

2—EL HIJO DEL SANTO

(2) 180, Tulancingo, Mexico

3—CIBERNETICO

(-) 175, Mexico City, Mexico

4—PERRO AGUAYO JR.

(3) 200, Zacatecas, Mexico

5—ATLANTIS

(8) 180, Guadalajara, Mexico

6—DR. WAGNER JR.

(4) 215, Mexico City, Mexico

7—LA PARKA

(6) 206, Sonora, Mexico

8—AVERNO

(-) 182, Mexico City, Mexico

9—NEGRO CASAS

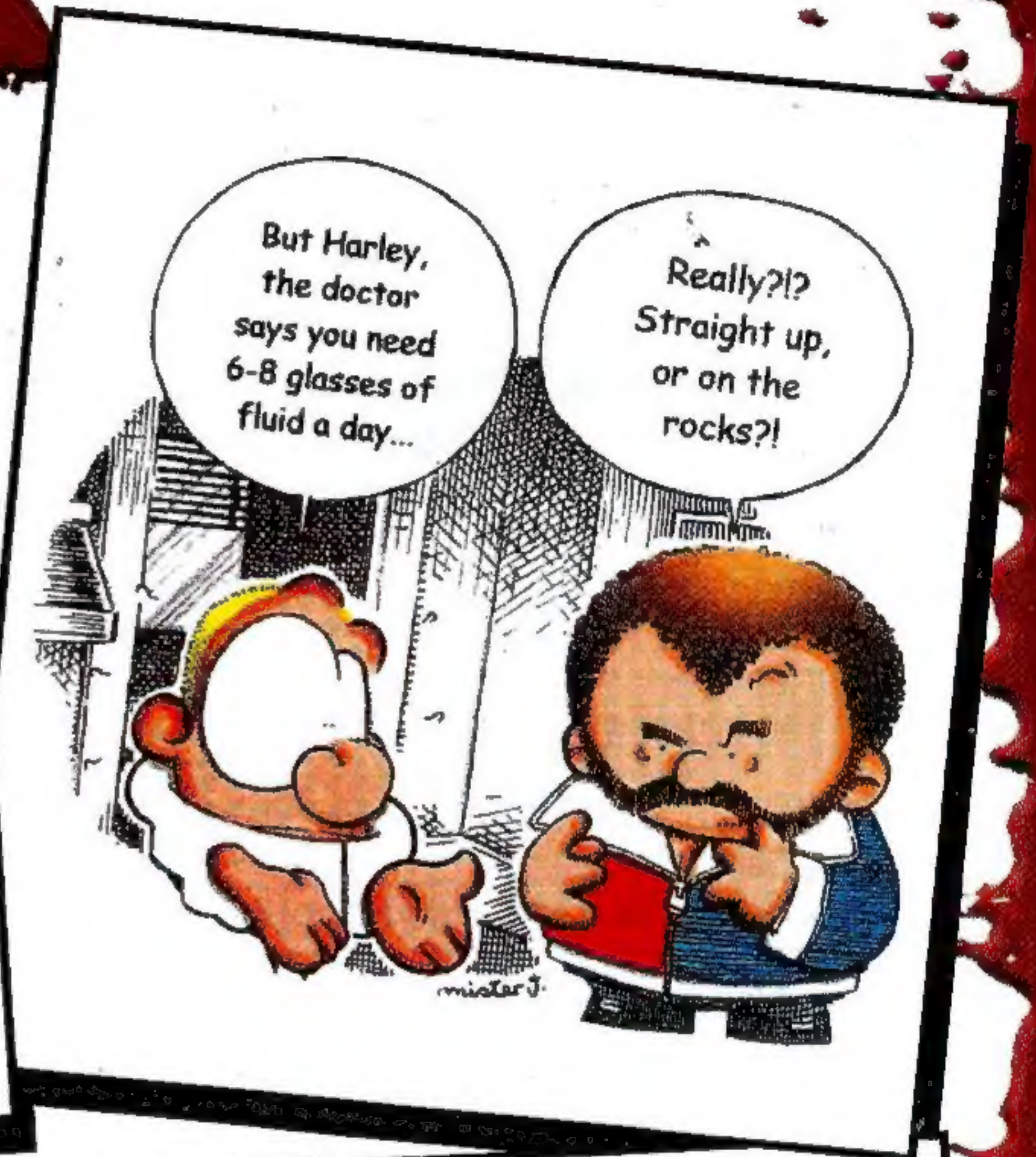
(-) 185, Mexico City, Mexico

10—LA PARK

(-) 235, Torreon, Mexico

Drawing BLOOD

By Jason Conlan





HOTLINE

Hosted by Jake Black

When it comes to wrestling, *Pro Wrestling Illustrated* magazine has all the inside information you want and it's only a phone call away. If it happens in the ring, the locker room, or on the road, you'll hear it here first. To get all the breaking stories from every federation, call the *Pro Wrestling Illustrated* Hotline now and you'll be the first to learn about...

- >> Exclusive news from behind the scenes
- >> Upcoming events
- >> Up-to-date results from around the world
- >> Title changes and transactions
- >> Pay-per-view reports
- >> Wrestler of the week
- >> Weekly ratings

PLUS...

Tell the editors of *Pro Wrestling Illustrated* what you want to see in the magazine. Dictate a letter to the Editor-in-Chief. Selected letters will be printed in *Pro Wrestling Illustrated*.

UPDATED EVERY TUESDAY AND FRIDAY AND AFTER PAY-PER-VIEW EVENTS

call now!

1-900-226-4PWI

☎ This service is available on both touch-tone and rotary-dial phones.

*Cost per minute in the United States is \$1.99. Kids, get your parents' permission.

5913/08-06